

HIA REF:

Witness Name:

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 – 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF **SR 153**

1. I worked with children firstly in Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, from 1970 to 1973 and then in Nazareth Lodge from 1973-1974.
2. My overall memories are limited and I can only recall some fairly basic information unless I have something very specific which I can recall the children getting out and about from both Houses. The older children would have been allowed out shopping and I remember special Christmas shopping trips which were always very enjoyable. There were parties for birthdays and Christmas and there would also have been events when the children would go out to parties held by local firms and businesses.
3. The children would have had a lot of entertainment, clubs and events to attend. Many would have gone for guitar tuition, joined the Scouts, Brownies and Guides and would have gone on outings with them as well as discos at the weekend for the older children.
4. I remember the boys also used to have access to a local football pitch and Nazareth House boys would have played there a lot.
5. During holiday periods, particularly in the summer, the children would have had trips to the seaside at Ballyhornan, Co. Down.
6. My memory of the food in both houses is that it was excellent. There was ample food for every child and I would even say that it was generous in their portion sizes. Meals were always healthy and nutritious for the children. The children enjoyed and looked forward to their mealtimes and I recall even that there would have been treats or extra snacks at times.
7. I do not recall witnessing anything that I would consider to be any form of abuse at the home. The discipline that was generally applied would have been verbal correction and discussion of events rather than any form of severe punishment.
8. I do remember a couple of children who wet the bed regularly and in particular two sisters who wet the bed. I cannot remember their names. We would have gone to get them first thing in the morning before the other children were woken up so that we could help them take their sheets down to the laundry area and have the sheets laundered so that their beds were dry and clean that night. The children would then have had a bath to ensure they were clean before they were dressed for the day.
9. I recall that during my time on the Ormeau Road, one of the girls who had finished at the

House got a job in a local bakery but continued to stay in Nazareth House for quite some time. She subsequently went to live with a local family and she would have continued to visit the house even when she had moved out. It was not unusual for the former residents to come back to visit the Sisters and the other children at Nazareth House and Lodge when they had left. I did have some photographs but some of the older girls who came to visit me when I was in Hammersmith, asked if they could have some of the photographs for their memories and I gave the photographs to them and did not retain them.

10. I am sorry that I cannot provide an awful lot of information as I was in Belfast for short period and my memories of the time are not very clear.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____

SR 153

Dated _____

31st (No) October 2014

Name: SR153

Date: 7th November 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of SR153

I, SR153, will say as follows: -

1. I have read through the witness statement of HIA62. When I went to Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, HIA62 was one of the girls in my group. At that time, she was twelve years old and had started to attend the nearby St. Monica's Secondary School. She had plenty of intelligence and did well at Secondary School despite missing out on a period of Primary Education. She was a polite, friendly, well behaved girl. She had a great sense of humour and was very popular with the rest of the group. HIA62 was musically gifted and had a beautiful singing voice. She played guitar and led the other girls whenever we had sing songs in the evenings.
2. HIA62 was very sensitive and kind and, despite her gifts, did not have much confidence in herself. She needed a lot of affirmation and encouragement; there was a certain air of sadness about her at times. She was still at Nazareth House and attending the same school when I left for the Lodge in 1973. She keeps in touch with me from time to time and visited when I was stationed at Nazareth House, Hammersmith, London in later years.
3. As I was in South Africa from 1958 – 1968 and in Dublin until 1970, I cannot comment on many of HIA62's allegations regarding her stay in Ormeau Road before that time.
4. HIA62's two sisters and her brother are well-known to me. When I went to the Ormeau Road, HIA61 had finished her school and had a job in the Ormeau Bakery. She stayed with the group for some time, until she went to live with the family in Belfast, where she had spent holidays when she was still at school. During

my last seven years in Hammersmith, HIA61 and her husband [REDACTED] who live in [REDACTED], came to stay at Nazareth House for a week each year and set off daily on their planned 'London Walks'. HIA63 and her husband visited Hammersmith a few times. Her brother [REDACTED] who was living in London for some time in the 1980's, but not working, came to Nazareth house for his dinner every Sunday. HIA62's grandmother was still alive in 1970. She was living alone and in very poor circumstances. Sometimes, on Sunday afternoons, HIA62 and another girl from the group visited her and brought her a bag of goodies. The [REDACTED]'s were a very close family and always looked out for each other.

5. In the early days, it was custom for the older children in care to attend daily Mass. However, around the time when family grouping was organised, the children were obliged to attend Mass on Sundays only and were free to attend on their own at any other time if they wished.
6. With reference to paragraph 12, it was custom to have some of the older children polish the floors of the large institutional type rooms. However, they seemed to have a lot of fun doing it and did not seem to see it as a punishment or a hardship. This practice ceased, of course, as soon as the children moved into family groups in flats. NHB102 mentioned by HIA62 was still the [REDACTED] when I was in the Ormeau Road. He was certainly a lovely, kind man and very gifted as he done most of the [REDACTED] work in the children's new flats. The cockroaches on the wall outside the children's old dining room had mercifully fled by the time I arrived at Ormeau Road.
7. With regard to paragraph 15, I cannot comment on the practice of punishing children for bedwetting, as I never witnessed anything like that happening in our children's homes in South Africa, where I was previously stationed.
8. With regard to paragraph 16, it is to be regretted that HIA62 was deprived of two years primary school education and thus not given a chance to sit for the 11+ examination. She was a very intelligent girl and felt, and still feels, this unfairness very deeply.
9. With regard to paragraph 18, many of the children spent the school holidays with families who wanted to give a child in care experience of family life. It was wonderful for the children to get out into the country or town and enjoy a change. They were

actually spoilt and talked for ages afterwards about the good times they had with 'my family'.

10. With regard to paragraph 24, the local large department stores were always most generous in giving Christmas parties and lovely gifts to the children each year.
11. With regard to paragraph 27, I cannot understand how HIA62 got the idea that I didn't see eye to eye with the other Sisters and that I was 'ostracised by them and shouted at'. I had a very good relationship with all the Sisters and we were a very united community. She may have overheard another Sister (since deceased), who had a group of children in the flat, raising her voice when complaining to me that one of the children in my group had done something which displeased her. HIA62 maybe presumed I was getting a 'telling off' as the children often used the words 'shouted at' when they meant 'corrected'. I certainly was not ever crying.
12. With regard to paragraph 28, the older girls in my group went to disco dancing in the parish hall next door one night a week and enjoyed it very much. They were given a key to the back door and, on their return, always let it be known that they were home safely.
13. With regard to paragraph 37, the evening HIA62 fled from her abusive husband in [REDACTED], she arrived in a terrified state at Nazareth House, Hammersmith. HIA62 asked if she would take shelter from him and the superior very kindly gave her accommodation until she went to live with her sister in [REDACTED] a short time later.
14. HIA62 keeps in touch and seems to be happy working in Adult Social Care.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed [REDACTED] SR153

Dated 12th November 2014

Name: SR153
Date: 7th November 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of SR153

I, SR153 will say as follows: -

1. In August 1970, I was appointed to Nazareth House, Ormeau Road to teach in the Primary School and to care for a group of fourteen girls between the ages of 7 and 15 in the Children's Home. There were two other groups of children in different parts of the building.
2. The month before I arrived at the Ormeau Road, the large institutional-style accommodation where all the children lived together, had recently been renovated and refurbished to comprise three modern, comfortable flats; each with a dining room, sitting room, study room and nicely decorated smaller bedrooms. Some of the rooms were shared by siblings in the groups. The children loved and took great pride in their homely, cosy accommodation.
3. The older children attended the local St Monica's Secondary School and the younger children attended the Nazareth House Primary School. There was a happy atmosphere in the home and the children were very well cared for. Their meal-times together were pleasant and the food was always sufficient, varied, wholesome and to the child's liking – extra treats were often provided. Some free/playtime was enjoyed after school and then it was homework time before supper – more homework time for the older girls after supper, if necessary. They were all free to enjoy their favourite TV programmes after supper and often had 'sing-songs' together; few of them had learnt to play the guitar.
4. There were outings and parties – especially at Christmas time and the children always had an abundance of toys and games. Birthdays were remembered and

celebrated. Saturday was 'shopping day' when the children enjoyed spending their pocket money.

5. Many of the children joined the local Girl Guides and Brownie Packs and enjoyed the activities there. The highlight of the week for the teenage girls in one group, was the disco which was held at the holy ^{Rosary} Parish Hall next door. The assistant Carer in the group often accompanied the girls to the disco. All the children spent a few weeks of the summer holidays with 'approved' families; these families had a long-term interest in the individual children and often had them for weekends and at other times.
6. I greatly enjoyed my three years with the children in the Ormeau Road; it seemed a peaceful time for them despite that 'The Troubles' were bringing stress and suffering to many in Belfast at the time. I do not remember encountering any difficulties with the children during those years.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed

SR153

Dated 12th November 2014

Name: SR153
Date: 7th November 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of SR153

I, SR153, will say as follows: -

1. In early September 1973, I was transferred to the nearby Nazareth Lodge to teach in the Primary school and to care for a group of eight boys and six girls between the ages of 6 and 13. My time there was short – just a little less than a year. I have good memories of that time and did not sense any stresses or encounter any difficulties in any of the groups.
2. The children in the Lodge lived in bright, spacious flats – two in the main building and two in a new building attached; these were tastefully decorated.
3. The girls attended St. Monica's Secondary School and the younger children attended the Nazareth House Primary School in the grounds.
4. As in Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, the children in the Lodge were very well cared for, had lovely meals, lots of fun and were happy together. The annual long holiday at the seaside in Ballyhornan for the Lodge children was the highlight of the year for them. There, they slept in bunk beds – a huge novelty – and spent happy days swimming, playing football on the sand, fishing in the rock pool's etc. They enjoyed their meals which were prepared by a lady living locally. The holiday shopping was a great treat. Some children were able to spend part of their holidays (before going to Ballyhornan) with their own families and others spent some time with 'approved' families who took an interest in them.
5. After school, the boys frequently played football in the parish football pitch adjacent to the House and enjoyed watching the matches between the local teams (Knockbreda, etc) at the weekends; they were football crazy. On Saturdays, they

loved to stay up quite late to watch 'Match of the Day' on TV and to have a special 'feast' all to themselves before going to bed. The girls were not interested in staying up late.

6. On school days, homework was always done before supper and there were lots of toys and games for the children to enjoy in the evenings and at other times. Halloween celebrations and many Christmas parties were enjoyed and there was the special 'shopping spree' before Christmas.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed  SR153

Dated 12th November 2014

Name: SR153
Date: 7th November 2014

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

Witness Statement of SR153

I, SR153, will say as follows: -

1. HIA257 was not in my group of children at any time while I was in the Ormeau Road, 1970 – 1973. There is little in her statement that I can respond to.
2. When she was in Nazareth House, Ormeau Road, HIA257 was cared for by Sr SR199. SR199 went every Friday evening to collect HIA257 from the boarding school, where she spent the week, and drove her back to school again on Sunday evenings.
3. I know that Sister was very kind to HIA257 and did all she could do to ensure that she enjoyed a nice weekend back at Nazareth House. I saw very little of HIA257 but I know she was still spending weekends with SR199 and her group of children at the time when I was transferred to Nazareth Lodge in 1973.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed SR153

Dated 12th November 2014.

Name: SR153

Date: 7th November 2014**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**

Witness Statement of SR153

I, SR153 will say as follows: -

1. I have read through the witness statement of HIA 41. During the time I was in Nazareth Lodge, 1973 – 1974, HIA 41 was one of the children in my group. He was then ten years old and attending Primary School located in the grounds of Nazareth Lodge. He was a happy, likeable little boy, always full of chat about himself – how many times he won the marble games with the other boys, how many marbles he had now, how good he was at football etc. I always thought he was a little immature compared with the other children of his age. I felt he was needy and insecure and perhaps looking for affirmation from adults.
2. His behaviour never gave any cause for concern; he got on very well with the children and they were fond of him. He was alert and quite intelligent, although he did not seem to have much interest in schoolwork.
3. HIA 41 we called him HIA 41, was also a very innocent, gentle child, always anxious to please and offer help. I remember, he was obsessed with looking after goldfish (his own private possession) which he kept in a large jar. It was a scene of tragedy that Saturday morning when the goldfish slipped down the hand basin plughole while he was changing the water in the jar. The other boys and himself kept vigil until dinner time at the end of water spout outside the building in the hope that the goldfish would somehow emerge.
4. When I was transferred to Nazareth House, Derry in 1974, HIA 41 was still in Nazareth Lodge. As I was in Nazareth Lodge for such a short time, I can respond to very little of HIA 41's allegations.

5. With regard to paragraph 2, I was aware of HIA 41's family background and difficult times he and his brother NL56 and sister NL57 endured before they came to Nazareth Lodge.
6. When I went to the Lodge, NL55, one of the older girls in my group of children, went to help at Reception for a few hours every morning after her supper. Her duties were to answer the doorbell and the telephone and to inform the Sisters or others of all calls and visitors. After I left, it would seem that HIA 41 replaced NL55 at reception duty. I was not aware that NL55 had any other duties to perform while there – as HIA 41 had.
7. Concerning the assertion that his hair was cut to humiliate him, I cannot see this to be a fact. It looks like HIA 41 who was so fragile because of his early years of deprivation, saw everyone and anything he didn't like as proof that 'they are out to get me', so to speak. Sister would simply have trimmed his untidy long hair, as at that time, boys usually let their hair grow to below their ears. That was the style they wanted and they loved it.
8. With regard to paragraph 27, this, of course, is incorrect. When I left for Derry, I was replaced by SR30 who was most kind and caring and committed to her work with the children. Sister was also an outstanding teacher. After some time in the Lodge, Sister was appointed [REDACTED] at St Michaels Primary School and did a magnificent job there, transforming the school into a centre of educational excellence. HIA 41 probably saw SR30's move from the group as yet another desertion and rejection of himself by adults.
9. With regard to paragraphs 31 and 32, i can confirm that when the boys had completed their primary school education or had reached a certain age, they were transferred to the De La Salle Boy's Home in Kircubbin. I'm sure this would have been discussed with HIA 41 beforehand and SR46 would then have organised the transfer with his social worker.
10. HIA 41 probably did not want to leave the Lodge; where life was good for him and he felt trusted, special, important and maybe indispensable. He was now facing an unknown future and would have felt bewildered, insecure and rejected by adults yet again – given his difficult past. It would seem that after SR30 left, his behaviour deteriorated and he became quite difficult to deal with – running away, for instance. We can understand his anger; he felt he had been let down again and his world was

falling apart. He probably would have gone to Kircubbin with a negative attitude and maybe expected that everyone there would be 'out to get him' and against him.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed _____ SR153

Dated 12th November 2014

SR 153

No, no Guiney, no not at all.

You were split obviously between -

SR 153

No, no.

- the House and the Lodge.

SR 153

No, no it was mostly boys, there were 12 boys in my group that are.

Well just getting back there just for a general thing, would you ever have hit any of the kids at all and how would you have chastised them.

SR 153

Ehm I used eh to deprive them of maybe television and there again sometimes I'd find myself bringing them back in half way you know, I used to do that, or ehm a forfeit a little something or other but it was mostly (inaudible) and that was my belief, talk to them you know and say I'm surprised now that you would do that sort of thing, come on, yeah that was, that was how I had, I didn't touch them at all, though I believe we were

1 covered, when talking about SR134.

2 **A. Because her daughter and I used to take the coke bottles**
3 **up to the local shop.**

4 Q. In paragraph 21 you talk about another family that you
5 went out to who were very kind to you, but they had 18
6 children of their own.

7 **A. Yes.**

8 Q. That caused its own difficulties, albeit your experience
9 with them was a positive one.

10 **A. It was, yes, but although they had so many children, the**
11 **little girl -- because they were mainly boys, and the**
12 **older girl was like 20, but the daughter was my age,**
13 **which I think is why she wanted -- wanted me to go out**
14 **to her during the summer holidays. She was a very**
15 **devout Catholic and, you know, the children and what**
16 **have you. You wouldn't think they would want another**
17 **mouth really to feed, but very, very kind family, yes.**
18 **It was a nice experience.**

19 Q. Then in paragraphs 26 and 27 you talk about SR153.

20 **A. Uh-huh.**

21 Q. Now this is SR153, who you describe essentially as she
22 was the mother you didn't have.

23 **A. Uh-huh. Yes, yes.**

24 Q. You continue to have a very positive relationship with
25 her to this day.

Hhmm.

SR 153

And ehm advised them but I said look I'm sorry you will not be able to go next week you'll have to forfeit next week and, and they, we did but continued after that and I don't remember any trouble after that, that seemed to you know.

Who were those particular kids there, can you remember those.

SR 153

There was, yeah there was HIA 62 and there is HIA 117 and and ehm not NBH 133 and -

Hhmm.

SR 153

- they were 5 of the older ones you know.

Right, they were the older ones

SR 153

They were, yeah.

1 SR153.

2 A. Yes. Our HIA62 -- SR153 had came just as I was leaving,
3 I think about 1970. She was like a breath of fresh air.
4 Our HIA62 always got on well with her. She's kept in
5 touch with her. She lost touch with her for a lot of
6 years, but then she found out that she was in
7 Hammersmith, Nazareth House in Hammersmith, and she went
8 to see her down there. She said that if we were ever in
9 London, we could go in and see her and stay with her for
10 a week-end or -- so I did go down and see her, and after
11 a few times I mentioned it, because she was talking to
12 me, and she said to me, "Are you a bit deaf?" and
13 I explained everything what had happened. She was
14 obviously very, very shocked. She didn't -- wasn't
15 aware things like that went on, but it was before her
16 time. I told her it was SR116. She said she would
17 speak to the Reverend Mother there. When she came back,
18 she said she spoke to the Reverend Mother and the
19 Reverend Mother would try and contact SR116 and find out
20 a bit more about this.

21 So the time that I was there the Reverend Mother
22 didn't come to see me, but I went back down to see
23 SR153. She said she had some information. SR116 had
24 been entered as a novice into the convent at 18 by her
25 German father, who had a mental health problem. So

1 I just -- and she had been all around the world. She
2 had been to nearly every Nazareth House in the world,
3 because everywhere she'd went she has had problems and
4 they have had to move her all the time and they have had
5 to change her name. So right now, to be honest, I don't
6 know what her name is.

7 Then I'd got a card in the post and it said --
8 I tried to find it and I can't. It just said, "Dear
9 HIA61, I'm very sorry for what happened to you as
10 a child. I don't remember any of this, but if you said
11 it happened, then it must be true. I hope in your heart
12 you will forgive me and maybe some time in the future
13 I will see you again."

14 Q. Did you ever see SR116 again?

15 A. I've never, no.

16 Q. Going back to your statement here, you say that you
17 rarely had visitors, but there was an elderly couple who
18 came to see you in the home. Although you thought at
19 the time they were your grandparents --

20 A. Oh, yes, yes.

21 Q. -- it actually turned out they were actually a great
22 aunt and uncle.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. You say you were punished after they left, because you
25 would ask for things in front of them, because you felt