

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 284

Witness Name HIA 284

## THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

## WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 284

HIA 284 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born in [REDACTED] County Derry.
2. My mother was called [REDACTED]. I was born in the infirmary of a workhouse in [REDACTED] where my mother lived. She was unmarried when she had me. I don't know who my father was. I have one brother and one sister. I am the eldest in the family. I am five years older than my brother HIA 351 and three years older than my sister SND 446. My sister sadly passed away last year. We had different fathers.
3. We moved back to [REDACTED] in County Donegal where my mother was from. My Uncle [REDACTED] took charge of the family when my grandparents died and he asked the Sisters of Nazareth to take us into care. I think I was taken to Termonbacca by a woman from the Welfare. HIA 351 was also placed in Termonbacca and SND 446 was sent to Nazareth House in Bishop Street.

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St Joseph's Children's Home, Termonbacca (1/10/1945 – 6/5/1953)

4. I was placed in Termonbacca on 1<sup>st</sup> October 1945 when I was nearly three years old. I left when I was ten years old.
5. I do not remember any of the nun's names in Termonbacca. I do remember that the nuns were strict disciplinarians. They had strict rules which we had to abide by and any breach of these rules resulted in the nuns clipping us around the ear or beating us with a strap. I am not sure whether they wore the strap around their waist or kept it in the large pockets of their habits. I recall on one occasion when I was about five or six I was put in the corner of a big room in the home and beaten with a strap by a nun. I do not remember her name.
6. Whilst in Termonbacca I have a memory of an older woman dressed in black coming to visit me around Christmas every year. She sat in the garden and gave me fruit. I don't know who she was but looking back she may have been an aunt or another relative.
7. I had rickets as a child. I was called 'bandy legs' in the home. My legs were broken and reset to make them straight. I have scars on my legs and arms and I don't know how I got them but I assume it had something to do with rickets. However I do not remember having an operation or being in hospital.
8. My sister **SND 446** was in Nazareth House and she was fostered during holidays by a woman called **[REDACTED]** who lived in Derry. I was taken to her house for the day at Christmas. **HIA 351** and **SND 446** were there but I didn't know they were my brother and sister.
9. I remember working on the farm in Termonbacca. I worked in the fields cutting hay with a sickle. Then we had to rake it up and put it into sheaths. If we didn't do the work proper **SND 219** would hit us around the legs or the body with a short stick or his hands **SND 219** lived on the premises. He worked on the farm and did odd jobs around the home. He was also the bandmaster.

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10. I was made to attend Irish dancing classes in the home. I was beaten with a belt by the nuns because I wouldn't do the steps properly. I was in a brass band in the home and I played the bass.
11. I attended school in Nazareth House on Bishop Street. We walked to school in a line and were taken by the nuns. One nun walked in front and one nun walked behind. The nuns taught reading, writing and arithmetic. They tried to teach us everything including Gaelic. There was a nice nun who taught me. However if we did anything wrong in school we had to drop our trousers and were beaten on the backside with a strap. After school we had to go out to the farm to work.
12. I recall a Brother Conlon coming to the home along with official looking men. About thirty or forty boys were taken into a room. Looking back I think it might have been all the boys whose mothers were unmarried when they gave birth to them. They made three lines in the room – one for Canada, one for South Africa and one for Australia. We were told a bit about each country – in Australia we were told that life would be wonderful and that we would be able to pick oranges off trees and ride to school on a kangaroo, in Africa we were told there was always sunshine and we were told it was all snow in Canada. We were then asked which country we wanted to go to. I chose Australia. Years later when I was in Bindoon a Brother told me that they were migrating children as they wanted the catholic population to grow.
13. Before I was deported I had a medical examination. I recall men in white coats. We had the examination in Termonbacca. The medical certificate is dated 11<sup>th</sup> April 1953. On my child migration form my mother is named a [REDACTED]. The consent section is signed by [REDACTED] SR 85, the Mother Superior in Termonbacca. It was witnessed by a Father Cyril Stinson who was a priest in Westminster in London.
14. I was deported to Australia on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1953 when I was ten years old. I sailed on the SS Otranto. I think I went along with five other boys from Termonbacca. I know one of them is still living and he is called [REDACTED] HIA 319. I have very little



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memory of the passage to Australia. Brother Conlon accompanied us on the journey. I remember passing through London and seeing the seats all set out for the Queen's coronation. I recall that we were put in a shed when we arrived at the port and we were stripped to stop us from absconding. I remember Brother Conlon saying that 'we were going to Australia' and I replied 'yeah right, not me'.

15. I think there may have been Scottish children on board the ship. The children that were being shipped to Australia had to perform for the paying passengers. Our faces were painted black to make us look like aborigines and we were made to sing Irish songs to entertain the passengers. Brother Conlon told us what to do. We were locked in our cabins during the journey to stop us running around the ship. I think we were always locked up. I was kept together with the other boys from Termonbacca. I think I was on deck once and that is when I threw my wire framed glasses overboard. I recall that we were not given enough food on the ship. I couldn't be sea sick as I wasn't getting enough food to eat.
16. I cannot remember much about my time in Termonbacca because I had such horrific experiences in Australia that it wiped my memories of my previous life in Derry.

**Bindoon (4/6/1953 – 14/11/58)**

17. I arrived in Fremantle on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1953. When we landed in Fremantle I remember clearly the fear and confusion I felt. It was a nightmare. I didn't know where we were. I expected to see kangaroos and orange trees as they told me in Termonbacca.
18. We were taken on the back of a truck from Fremantle to Clontarf. Along with a few other boys I was locked in a windowless cool room for three days. Our clothes and everything we had from home were taken away from us and the only contact we had from anyone was angry men who were shouting. I felt sure that they would belt me at any minute. I sat shivering and terrified. It was like being in prison waiting for punishment.

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19. Then we were taken without any explanation and thrown onto the back of an old supply truck driven by [BAU 20]. I was given a khaki shirt and shorts to wear but no shoes or underwear. I never wore shoes for five years. Nothing was said to us on the way to Bindoon. We were not fed or even given a drink. The journey seemed to take forever. I was placed in Bindoon when I was ten years old. I left on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1958 when I was sixteen. I was small for my age having suffered from rickets. I was thin, nervous and vulnerable.
20. We arrived at Bindoon on a Saturday night. We were met by [BAU 1] who was the Head Brother. He used to ride around on a white horse and he had a whip. We were sent straight away to join the boys in the cinema. We didn't receive any food. After the cinema we were sent to our dormitories.
21. The scene the next day was terrifying – there were hundreds of boys dressed like refugees carrying rocks and working like slaves. They were dressed in rags and had injuries. Once you saw the boys in the showers most had belt or whip marks across their backs and backsides. As an undersized skinny kid with glasses I knew I was in for it. We were dominated by the Brothers.
22. When any visitors arrived at the home, such as nuns [BAU 1] grabbed the Irish boys and made us stand on a table and sing songs. Visitors came to the home every Sunday and we were made to line up so they could pick which boy they wanted to take out. I was taken out by [AU 6] during holidays for years. She said she felt sorry for me because I was so thin. She bought me clothes and when I came back to the home they were taken off me by the Brothers. They didn't manage to find the sugar which I hid in my room that [AU 6] gave me. One Sunday some boys got on the tourists bus and stole stuff. The Brothers made us strip off and dive into a dam as that is where they thought the stuff was put. We found nothing. We were all punished for this incident.
23. There was sexual abuse and predatory behaviour going on all round me all the time in Bindoon. The bigger boys bullied the little ones. I was cornered and

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made to masturbate boys much older than me. I was also made to perform other sexual acts. There was no point resisting. I didn't have the size, strength or the friends to protect me.

24. I was sexually abused by the Brothers in Bindoon. I was abused by **BAU 21**

**BAU 21** I was sexually abused by one of the Benedictine nuns when I was in the infirmary. Her name was **SAU 3**

25. I was physically abused by older boys and Brothers in Bindoon **BAU 22**

had a dog called 'devil' and he set the dog on me. It held me down snarling until

**BAU 22** came over and laid into me with his strap. The strap had twelve coins sewn in it between layers of leather. One day **BAU 5** beat me up in the classroom when I could not read off the blackboard. He flew into a rage and hit me with the back of his hand across my face. I fell to the floor and he kicked me all over my legs and backside.

26. In Bindoon we were forced to do hard labour. At 5am we would be out in the fields carrying rocks for the building works or digging out malley roots in the freezing cold with no shoes and no warm clothes only our shirts and shorts. After 10am tea we had school for a few hours and then we were out again working. When they kicked me out of school at eleven I was sent to work in the Laundry which was terrible work. I wasn't strong enough to work on the building sites. The last proper education I had was back in Derry.

27. I never saw inspectors from the Australian Welfare Authority or from authorities in Northern Ireland while I was in Bindoon.

### Life after care

28. When I was seventeen years old I wrote to the Mother Superior in Termonbacca to ask about my family. She replied stating that my mother had died and she advised me to forget about her and get on with my life. I found out years later that my mother died from pneumonia in 1956 aged twenty six.



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29. When I left Bindoon I got a job as an apprentice glazer with [REDACTED] who visited Bindoon during mushroom season. He was a kind man. He was like family.
30. I left the welfare system with no idea how to relate to people. I had no idea of affection or kindness. I held the belief that I had to take whatever I wanted because nobody would do the right thing by me. Once I was an adult and relatively free, I went out of control. I ended up in prison in Geraldton for three years for theft and criminal damage. I felt safe in prison. It was better than any home I had been in. After I left prison I got another job as a glazer.
31. In 1969 I met my wife [REDACTED] who is from Belfast and we have been married for forty two years. We had two daughters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Sadly [REDACTED] has passed away. My daughter [REDACTED] and her son [REDACTED] live with us.
32. I worked right up until I was seventy. I worked in an aluminium factory and a farm and before I retired I was a cleaner in the shopping centre in [REDACTED].
33. In 1986 I wrote to a priest in [REDACTED] and asked if he knew anything about my family. He replied advising me that my mother died in 1956 and that I had a brother and sister. This is how I made contact with [REDACTED] HIA 351 and [REDACTED] SND 446. I visited Ireland in 1988 and met my brother [REDACTED] HIA 351 for the first time. The visit was arranged by the Child Migrant Trust. I was told by the nuns in Termonbacca that I had no family. [REDACTED] HIA 351 didn't know that he had any family either. He was also in Termonbacca. I am still in contact with [REDACTED] HIA 351. I met my sister [REDACTED] SND 446 once when she came to visit me in 2003. The visit didn't go very well as I didn't really get on with her and we didn't stay in contact after this. [REDACTED] SND 446 died last year of cancer in [REDACTED].
34. I didn't have a birth certificate as a child. Miss Anderson from the Welfare forwarded my birth certificate when I was in my twenties.

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35. I submitted a statement to the Redress Scheme in relation to my time in Bindoon. I received assistance from the Child Migrant Trust. I received \$45,000 AUD in compensation. It was initially supposed to be \$90,000 AUD but the WA Government reneged on this promise. Many boys including myself were hurt and upset by this.
36. I have been left with chronic anxiety and a lot of anger. I have no idea how to relate to people or how to relax in company. I am very wary of men, especially loud confident men. I had no idea how to parent my children or even how to cuddle and love them. I don't really know what love is; I just try to do right by people even though no one did right by me. Most of the time I feel more like I am watching than joining in. I feel very ashamed at my lack of education and wish I could have done more for my family.
37. I have missed out on a life with my family in Northern Ireland. I always wonder what my life could have been like if I wasn't migrated to Australia. However I know that other boys who have been in institutions have not been as lucky as me.

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed HIA 284

Dated 22/10/2013.



L.E.M. 3.

Ref. No. ....

Group Nomination No. ....

## Commonwealth of Australia

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, AUSTRALIA HOUSE, LONDON.

## Child Migration.

Sections A and C of this form are to be completed by the approved voluntary organisation in the United Kingdom. Section B to be completed by the parent or guardian of the child.

## SECTION A.

1. Name in full **HIA 284**  
(In block capitals, surname first)
2. Full Postal Address **St. Joseph's Home Termonbhacca**  
(In block capitals) **Londonderry, N. Ireland.**
3. Age **11 yrs 4 mths** Date and Year of Birth **[redacted]** Place of Birth **Derry**
4. Sex **Male** Weight **125 lbs** Church Denomination **Roman Catholic**
5. Furnish name and address of parent, guardian or next of kin **[redacted]**  
(If father is living his name must be given)
6. Is there any record of mental disease in the child? **No**
7. Has he or she at any time been subject to fits? **No**
8. Educational standard **3rd Standard**

Signed .....

For and on behalf of .....

Date **3.3.53**

(Name of Sponsoring Organisation)

**Byrle Stinson**  
 FEDERAL CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE  
 OF AUSTRALIA

## SECTION B.

## PARENT'S OR GUARDIAN'S CONSENT (FATHER IF LIVING)

I, **SR 84** **Superior**  
 of **St. Joseph's Home Termonbhacca Londonderry**  
 the { father } of **HIA 284**  
     { mother }  
     { guardian }

hereby consent to my child/ward proceeding to Australia under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme.

Dated this **10th** **SR 84** **1953**

Signature .....

\*Witness **Byrle Stinson**

Qualification .....

Address **146A St. Stephens House S.W.1.**

\*The witness to the parent's or guardian's consent must be one of the following :—

A Mayor, Magistrate, Provost or Justice of the Peace.

A Barrister, Advocate, Solicitor or Notary Public.

A Minister of Religion.

A Registered Medical Practitioner.

An Officer on the active or half-pay or pension lists, of any of His Majesty's Naval, Military or Air Forces.

A person on the active or pension list of the permanent Civil Service of the Crown, who is, or was at the date of retirement, in receipt of a salary of not less than £450 a year.

## SECTION C.

In the event of the child named in this application leaving Australia before the completion of 2 years residence (unless he/she is repatriated for medical reasons within twelve months of arrival) Aust. Patriotic Immigration Committee (name of sponsoring organisation) agree to repay the financial assistance granted in respect of an assisted passage.

Signed

*David Stinson*

(Representative of Organisation in the United Kingdom.)

Date

*27.2.53*

On completion, this form (in duplicate) should be forwarded with a certified copy of the child's birth certificate to:—

THE CHIEF MIGRATION OFFICER,  
AUSTRALIA HOUSE,  
STRAND,  
LONDON, W.C.2.

C. of A.  
Department of Immigration  
London.

Recommended

*A.*.....  
*Robert for* Interviewing Officer*22/4/53*

C. of A.  
Department of Immigration  
London.

Approved Assisted Passage

*Chief Migration Officer*.....  
*Robert for* Chief Migration Officer*22/4/53.*



HIA 284

For all persons, sixteen years of age and over, and those under sixteen not accompanied by parents.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, AUSTRALIA HOUSE,  
LONDON, W.C.2.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA  
DEPT. OF IMMIGRATION  
AUSTRALIA HOUSE  
1953 9-30 A.M.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION.

Declaration by Applicant

NAME

HIA 284

Full Name in Block Capitals

ST JOSEPH'S HOME TERMONBARCA DERRY

1. Have you ever had any serious accident/illness or surgical operation? If so, please furnish details  
No
2. Have you or has any member of your family ever suffered from or been suspected of Tuberculosis?  
NO
3. Have you ever had Enuresis or any sign of disease of the Genito Urinary Organs? No.
4. Have you or has any member of your family ever suffered from mental disease or epilepsy or been treated in an institution of any kind for these Diseases? NO
5. What medical attention have you required during the last twelve months? NONE

I hereby certify that the information supplied is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of applicant which must be made in the presence of the Medical Referee

HIA 284

Results of Medical Examination.

AGE 10 yrs. HEIGHT 3ft 9 in. WEIGHT 4 stone

A. Heart NAD F. Genito Urinary Organs NAD  
Urine NAD

Blood Pressure NAD G. Sight without glasses RE 6/6 LE 6/6  
with glasses (if worn) RE 6/6 LE 6/6  
(Snellen's Type)

B. Lungs (Particularly Tuberculosis) NAD Cause of defect in sight NAD

X-Ray report NAD H. Hearing Normal

C. a. Nervous System Normal I. Physique Good

b. Mental Condition Normal J. Skin Clear

D. Intelligence NAD K. If pregnant, period of pregnancy

E. Digestive Organs NAD L. Teeth Good

REMARKS (include particulars of any departure from normal conditions not fully set out in above)

In cases where the Medical Examiner is unable to describe the applicant as being in perfect health, he should state under "REMARKS" the exact nature of the defect which he finds and whether it is of temporary or permanent nature. The presence of Pediculi should be noted.

Any disablement received on Active Service or otherwise should also be noted and commented on, and if a Pension is received the amount of it should be stated.

I certify that I have this day examined the above-named and am of opinion that the applicant is/  
~~is not~~ in good health and of sound constitution, and is not suffering from any mental or bodily defect  
which would cause inability to earn a living as a School boy

State Occupation

Date 11/4/53

Signature and Qualifications

Address 2 Danel Te.,

Lumandeng

TO:—





[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
IRELAND

DEAR HIA 284 [REDACTED]

JUST A FEW LINES IN ANSWER TO YOUR LAST LETTER  
HIA 284 THE REASON I AM LATE IN WRITING I WAS IN HOSPITAL FOR  
THREE WEEKS, AND I WOULD NOT WRITE TO YOU, UNTIL I WENT UP  
TO DONEGAL, TO TRY AGAIN TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOU AND MIE  
BEFORE I WENT TO DONEGAL I HAD TO GET  
MORPHINE TABLETS FROM THE DOCTOR, AND THEN [REDACTED] DO THE  
DRIVING. THE TABLETS WERE TO JUST GET ME THERE AND  
BACK, WE WENT FOR FIVE DAYS BUT ONLY STAYED TWO

WHEN WE ARRIVED THE FIRST PERSON I SPoke TO WAS  
[REDACTED] NOW THIS MAN LIVED BESIDES OUR HOUSE IN  
[REDACTED] FOR THE LAST FIFTY FIVE YEARS. HE WOULD  
ABSOLUTELY TELL ME NOTHING; WASTE OF TIME, HIS ANSWER WAS TO  
LET THE DEAD REST.

THE NEXT PERSON WAS [REDACTED] HER  
MARRIED NAME IS [REDACTED] SHE WAS EXCELLANT. SHE  
IS FIFTY FOUR, SHE REMEMBERED [REDACTED] AND ME BUT SHE WAS  
TO YOUNG TO REMEMBER YOU, [REDACTED] BROUGHT ME UP TO  
SEE HER MOTHER AND FATHER, AND THEY REMEMBERED YOU

HIA 284 OUR MOTHER WORKED FOR THIS BLOCK, [REDACTED]  
APPARENTLY HIS WIFE DIED AT A YOUNG AGE, SO WHEN OUR  
MOTHER WENT TO WORK FOR HIM, SHE WAS ONLY FOURTEEN  
YOU CAN GUESS WHAT HAPPENED, WHEN YOU WERE BORN, YOU  
WERE BROUGHT BACK TO THE HOUSE IN [REDACTED]  
AND NOW THIS IS WHERE IT GETS HAIRY. YOU DEFINITELY  
WERE IN THE HOUSE IN [REDACTED] BUT AT WHAT

2.

AGE YOU LEFT NO ONE IS SURE.

HIA 284 THIS WAS THE SET UP IN THE HOUSE.

GRANDFATHER [REDACTED] DIED 1956.

GRANDMOTHER [REDACTED] NEE, [REDACTED] FROM [REDACTED] DIED 1956.

UNCLE [REDACTED] DEAD,

UNCLE [REDACTED] SCOTLAND.

UNCLE [REDACTED] ???

UNCLE [REDACTED] AUSTRALIA.

AUNT [REDACTED] CORK IN IRELAND

AUNT [REDACTED] DEAD 1990.

AUNT [REDACTED] DEAD 1951.

AUNT [REDACTED] SHE DOES NOT WANT TO KNOW (BUT MAYBE)

IF I CAN GET TO HER I WILL SEE IF SHE KNOWS ANYTHING,

OUR SISTER [REDACTED] DEAD 1940.

OUR MOTHER, [REDACTED] 1953. BETTER KNOWN AS [REDACTED]

UNCLE [REDACTED] WAS THE DOMINANT FORCE IN

THE HOUSE, AS OUR GRANDFATHER WAS ON THE ROAD

MOST OF THE TIME SELLING CLOTH FROM THE BACK OF A

BICYCLE, TRYING TO MAKE MONEY TO KEEP THE HOUSE

GOING, AND ALSO REPAIRING SHOES AND BOOTS.

OUR MOTHER WHEN SHE WAS ALIVE COULD KEEP

[REDACTED] IN CHECK, BUT WHEN SHE DIED, [REDACTED] RULED

WITH AN IRON HAND, AND USED IT OFTEN, THEN WHEN

THE GRANDPARENTS DIED, [REDACTED] GOT RID OF THE REST

OF US. I HEARD HE GOT £15 - FOR THE HOUSE, HIS

FARE TO ENGLAND

HIA 284 THE NEXT PERSON I SPOKE TO WAS [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SHE IS 86 BUT AS SHARP AS A TACK. SHE

TOLD ME A LOT OF WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN BUT NOT IT

ALL. SHE TOLD ME, SHE WOULD NOT TELL ME THINGS

3.

UNLESS THEY WERE FACTOR, SHE TOLD ME TO LET THE  
DEAD REST BUT IT IS VERY HARD TO LET GO WHEN ALL I  
WANT TO KNOW IS WHAT HAPPENED

HIA 284

I AM HAVING TWO MORE OPERATIONS AND  
WHEN I GET BETTER, I WILL TRAVEL ALL OVER THE PLACE TO TRY  
AND FIND OUT MORE, AS THEN I WILL HAVE THE TIME

HIA 284

DO NOT SHED ANY TEARS AS I HAVE SHED  
ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF US, I AM SORRY IF I HAVE HURT YOUR  
FEELINGS, BY TELLING YOU WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN,

HIA 284

WILL YOU SEND ME A PHOTOSTAT COPY OF  
YOUR BIRTH CERTIFICATE, AS IT WILL HELP ME IN TRACING.  
IF NOT ITS OK,

HIA 284

I WILL FURNISH AS I CAN UPON  
AT THE MOMENT,

HIA 284

Just keep in contact, if I  
change my address I will let you know

HIA 284

Tell [REDACTED] I am sorry for the  
day she came, Not even a Slice of Bread  
in the house God but did I feel bad,  
come my best to your [REDACTED]

HIA 351

Love

pernity  
XXX