

PRIVATE

HIA REF: 322

Witness Name HIA 322

**THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 322**

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HIA 322 will say as follows:-

**Personal Details**

1. I was born on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in Belfast. My mother was called [REDACTED] and she was born in [REDACTED]. My mother and one of her sisters [REDACTED] were the only people who were aware of my existence. I never knew the identity of my father.
2. I was placed in St Joseph's Baby Home, Ravenhill Road, Belfast when I was a month old. My mother moved to England after I was placed in care and I never saw her again. She married and had three daughters. One daughter, [REDACTED] is now deceased but I have a lot of contact now with my other two half sisters [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

**Nazareth Lodge, Belfast (1 September 1949 - 21 December 1956)**

3. I was moved to Nazareth Lodge, Belfast on 1 September 1949 when I was six years old. My mother never came to visit me during the time that I stayed at Nazareth Lodge.

PRIVATE

4. I remember a few things about my time in Nazareth Lodge. A family called [REDACTED] were my sponsors for my First Communion and Confirmation. They owned a [REDACTED] business in Belfast known as [REDACTED]. They took me out every other weekend and during holidays. They wanted to adopt me but the Catholic Church would not allow it for some reason. They were very good to me over the years.
5. I recall a nun called [REDACTED] SR 71 at Nazareth Lodge, Belfast who used to teach physical education and she was very good to me and kind to the boys.
6. I was not sexually or physically abused during my time at Nazareth Lodge. I got the occasional smack now and then but was not subjected to any mistreatment during my time in care there. I recall that they would have put the fear of God into you, and they were very strict on religion. We would have been spoken to, or we would have got a whack on the ear, or our hair pulled if we were caught speaking in church, but that is because there was a huge emphasis placed on religion in the home.
7. My years at Nazareth Lodge were spent behind brick walls, hidden and lost.
8. I recall at Nazareth Lodge there was confusion over my date of birth. I had always thought that I was born in 1944. I was small for my age but when I got my original birth certificate, I discovered that I was in fact a year older than I thought. It was the Child Migrants Trust who located my original birth certificate in or around 2002.
9. I recall two Christian Brothers coming to Nazareth Lodge from Bindoon, to speak to us about Australia. I think they had Australian accents. They asked who wanted to go and I put my hand up as did another fourteen boys. We had no idea where Australia was and I thought it was a picnic spot somewhere in Belfast. All the boys that put their hands up were selected to go, and that is all I recall about the selection process.

PRIVATE

10. I received my vaccination soon after their visit and was transferred a few days later. My child migration form shows that my parents were not in contact with the home to give permission for the purpose of my migration, so my form was signed by the Mother Superior [REDACTED] SR 104

11. There were two civilian women sent with us as our guardians on the ship. I had never met them before and after we arrived in Australia I never met them again. We travelled from Southampton on the SS Strathnaver on 24 December 1956. I do not recall a great deal about the sailing to Australia. I felt sick on the ship following the vaccinations I had received prior to departure. Also, I recall I had been given a pair of roller skates, probably by the [REDACTED] family, and one of the boys threw one of my skates overboard. I went mad with rage and had to be restrained on the ship and calmed down in the captain's cabin. We arrived in Fremantle on 22 January 1957.

**Bindoon (22 January 1957 – 1961)**

12. We were taken to Castledare upon arrival. We were wearing heavy winter clothes and we arrived mid-summer in Australia and it was very hot. When we arrived at Castledare we were given a shirt and shorts to wear. We all started crying and saying that we wanted to go back to Ireland but one of the Brothers said "Keep that up and I'll give you something to cry for". I do not recall the name of the Brother who made that comment.

13. We stayed at Castledare for a week or two and then we were split up and some of the boys were sent to Bindoon. I was sent to Bindoon with a couple of the other boys from Belfast. By the time I arrived, a lot of the building work at Bindoon had been completed, so we did not have to do as much heavy manual work as the boys who were there from the mid 1940's.

PRIVATE

14. I found out in later years that the [REDACTED] family tried to keep in touch with me and they wrote letters to me in Australia but I never received them. I always wondered why they did not keep in touch.

15. [REDACTED] BAU 5 was in charge when I arrived and the [REDACTED] BAU 6 came to Bindoon and he was known as [REDACTED] BAU 6. I learned how to conform in order to stay out of trouble. The staff at Bindoon were mostly male, and I found it strange at first as it was a largely female workforce at Nazareth Lodge.

16. When I left Ireland I was not able to read or write very well but I managed. I went to school at Bindoon but I did not learn a great deal as the standard of education was very poor.

17. I do not recall anyone from the Child Welfare Department ever checking up on me during my time at Bindoon. No-one from the British Government or the Northern Ireland authorities ever contacted me following my transfer to Australia.

18. I thought life was hard at Bindoon. If you did not do as you were told, you would get a whack around the ear or a swift kick up the backside from one of the Brothers. I never experienced any affection there, nor did I experience any affection during my time in care in Northern Ireland. I do not even remember being hugged by any member of the [REDACTED] family throughout my childhood. The first time I ever received a hug from someone was from my wife.

### Life after care

19. The Brothers arranged a job and accommodation for me in a sawmill as an apprentice wood machinist, and then I was left to fend for myself. I got my own jobs after that, labouring and gardening.



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20. I never heard from the Child Welfare Department after I left Bindoon. They were my legal guardians until I turned twenty one but I never heard anything from them either before or after my twenty first birthday. I was very independent at that stage and looked after myself.
21. I did labouring work, building pumps from 1978 until 2005, for an oil company in [REDACTED]. We worked initially for three weeks on and one week off. The unions got involved and then we worked two weeks on and two weeks off.
22. I married my wife [REDACTED] in 1971 and had three children, two daughters and one son. I am a family man but I found it hard to show affection to my children, as no-one had ever shown me affection throughout life.
23. My son [REDACTED] worked for years in a bank in Perth and then moved to London to work in banking, but he did not like it there so he moved to Belfast. [REDACTED] a daughter of the [REDACTED] family, took care of him for a period of time in Belfast, until he had arranged a job and accommodation. He lived and worked in Belfast for five years and he loved it there. He then met and married a Polish girl and moved back to work in a bank in Melbourne.
24. I located my mother by getting in touch with the Child Migrants Trust about fifteen years ago. They traced her details for me and told me that I had three half sisters [REDACTED] (now deceased) [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. My mother had never told them or her husband about me so it was quite a shock for them to discover that they had an older brother.
25. When my son lived in Belfast I went over to visit him, and I met up with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] during my visit. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] flew from England to Belfast to meet me during this trip which was really nice of them. I recall there was an atmosphere in the taxi when we first met, but when we got out of the taxi I said that I had no ill feelings towards my mother for putting me in care and just wanted to get on with my life. This seemed to break the ice and after that

PRIVATE

they seemed more at ease and we got on really well together. We have kept in touch since and I have visited them a few times since then so that has really been a great help.

26. I took my three children [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to visit Bindoon with me about fifteen or sixteen years ago but they found it upsetting to think that I had been in care there. My oldest daughter [REDACTED] also visited Nazareth Lodge in Belfast with me and that upset her too. In fact the nuns gave my daughter some of my old school reports during this trip.

27. I received a grant from the UK government which helped fund my trip to Ireland in or around 2002. I visited my two half sisters in England during this trip. I also attended [REDACTED] sixtieth birthday in 2012 and the British government assisted me financially with this trip and my wife paid her own way.

28. I received money from a Mrs Musk who owned the land upon which Bindoon was situated. Some of the boys attending Bindoon including myself were beneficiaries in her will. I received \$2000 AUD from a trust fund that she had set up for some of the boys, which was very unexpected and greatly assisted me to fund one of my trips to visit my relatives.

29. I did not receive any compensation under the Australian Redress Scheme as I did not know anything about the scheme until after the deadline had expired. I never received any compensation from the Christian Brothers.

30. I keep in touch with [REDACTED] HIA 279 from time to time who sailed from Belfast to Australia with me, but other than that I do not keep in touch with any of the other ex-Bindoon boys. I have been married almost fifty years. I have five grandchildren and a great relationship with my wife and children, and despite my childhood I have managed to get on with my life.

PRIVATE

**Statement of Truth**

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

Signed **HIA 322** \_\_\_\_\_

Dated 24 - 10 - 2013

L.E.M. 3.

Ref No. ....

Group Nomination No. ....

**Commonwealth of Australia**

DEPARTMENT OF IMMIGRATION, AUSTRALIA HOUSE, LONDON

**CHILD MIGRATION****SECTION A.***To be completed by Voluntary Organisation in conjunction with parents or guardian*

- HIA 322**
1. Name in full ..... [REDACTED] .....  
(in block capitals) [REDACTED] (Christian Names) [REDACTED] (Surnames)
  2. Full postal address *Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Rd.*  
*Belfast, N. I.* Telephone No. *41356*
  3. Date of Birth [REDACTED] *43* Place of Birth *Belfast* Nationality *Irish*  
(Birth Certificate to be attached)
  4. Religion *R. P.*
  5. Father { Name .....  
Address .....  
Nationality ..... Occupation .....
  6. Mother { Name *Miss.* [REDACTED] .....  
Address *Unknown* .....  
Nationality ..... Occupation .....
- | Brothers | Name | Age | Address |
|----------|------|-----|---------|
| 7. and   |      |     |         |
| Sisters  |      |     |         |
8. Name and address of guardian (if applicable) *Mother Superior*  
*Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Rd, Belfast.*
  9. Names and addresses of any relatives in Australia
  10. Educational Standard *Standard II P. E. S.*  
(Attach school report)
  11. Intelligence Quotient to be stated *82*
  12. Details of any recent Intelligence or Vocational Tests with dates
  13. If child is in institutional care, state name of institution and date of child leaving parents' care  
*Nazareth Lodge, Ravenhill Rd, Belfast.*  
*Infancy*



14. State whether parents are still in contact with child and if so, reason for child's emigration

*no*

15. (a) Has the child been committed to the care of any person or body as a "fit person," or is the child in the care of a local authority or the Managers of an Approved School?

*no*

(b) If so, has the required consent of the Secretary of State to the child's emigration been obtained?

*no*

### Medical History

16. Sex *M.* Height *4' 5"* Weight *5 ST.*

17. What illnesses has the child had (including infectious complaints)?

*Measles.*

18. Has the child been vaccinated?

*yes.*

Date *18/11/55*

19. Has the child been immunized against diphtheria?

*yes.*

Date *Dec. 1955*

20. Has the child ever been in hospital?

*no*

21. If so, state complaint, date and hospital

22. Name and address of usual medical attendant

*Dr. McSorley  
Ormeau Rd. Belfast.*

23. Is it necessary or has it been necessary for the child to wear glasses? If so, supply details

*no*

24. Does the child wet the bed? If so, how frequently?

*no*

25. Has the child or any of the family or near relatives suffered from:

(a) mental deficiency, insanity or mental disease *no* } *unknown*

(b) epilepsy or fits *no* } *about*

(c) tuberculosis *no* } *relatives*

I certify that to the best of my knowledge and belief the foregoing particulars are correct and that I conscientiously believe **HIA 322** is a suitable child who will benefit by migration to Australia.

Signed

**SR 104**

for and on behalf of

*Superior*

(Name of sponsoring organisation)

Date

## SECTION B.

To be completed by Parent or Guardian (Father, if living)

I, (Name in full) ..... **SR 104** ..... (*Superior*)  
 of (address) .....  
 the { Father }  
       { Mother } of .....  
       { Guardian }

hereby consent to my child/ward proceeding to Australia under the Commonwealth Child Migration Scheme and understand that the Minister of Immigration will become his/her legal guardian upon arrival in Australia.

Date ..... Signature.. **SR 104** ..... (*Superior*)  
 \* Witness *Gabriel G. Harris* ..... Qualification *Solicitor* .....  
 Address *16 Goldstonebury Avenue, Anttrim Road, Belfast* .....

\* 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 Her 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.
- A Manager, Chief Cashier, or Accountant of a Bank.
- A Teacher at a school recognised by the Ministry of Education or the Scottish Education Department, or the Ministry of Education for Northern Ireland.
- A Police Officer not below the rank of Sergeant.

## SECTION C.

To be completed by Voluntary Organisation

In the event of the child named in this application leaving Australia before the completion of two years residence (unless he/she is repatriated for medical reasons within twelve months of arrival) ..... *the Federal Archdiocese Immigration Committee* .....

(name of sponsoring organisation) agree to repay, before the child leaves Australia, the full amount of the financial assistance granted towards the cost of the child's passage to Australia as an assisted migrant.

Signed *Shanley S. Howard* ..... **SR 104** ..... (*Superior*)  
 (Representative of Organisation in United Kingdom)

Date *14<sup>th</sup> December 1955* .....

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

THE CHIEF MIGRATION OFFICER,

HIA 322 Has two large scars one on each side of head, says he has had them for as long as he can remember.

Likes singing, football and cricket.

Says only likes school sometimes - usually found it difficult.

Hearing, sight and speech good.

I.Q. 53. Does not appear reliable may need further tests.

HIA 322 reading was too poor to be able to manage the group I.Q. test.

His BINET I.Q. may have improved another 10 points had he not found difficulty (a) with the types of questions asked him and (b) the testers accent which would have been as difficult for him to understand as was his to the tester

HIA 322 looks only 10 or 11 for his age. He claims to be 17½ yrs. He does not look undernourished and converses as a boy of 8 years. He has the attainment of an 8 yr old and is certainly slow but his degree of slowness viz. his intellectual ability needs checking when he becomes better settled in and can understand our accent better. A further check on his age from Nazareth Lodge Belfast would not be redundant in this case as this factor directly affects the assessment of his intelligent ability, which does not seem as low as the tests show, even allowing for the unpleasant weather conditions and the suddenness of the testing after his arrival.

- Rec. 1. That HIA 322 be given a hearing, eyesight and medical check up, particularly re scars, to discount the possibility of brain damage having occurred at birth.
2. A further intelligence test at a later date to ascertain a more reliable result.
3. Re check on birth date.
4. Placement in Std. 4 (ie. grade 5) with an understanding teacher.

C.798

February 8th, 1956.

9 FEB 1956

9 FEB 1956

Very Reverend and dear Canon Flood,

Thank you for your letter

and forms received.

Regarding

C.798  
HIA 322C.795  
HIA 307

and AU 41

**AU 41**

the Mothers of these boys, who were unmarried

the time of their births, have never visited or contacted us in anyway since leaving them in our care as infants. Communications forwarded to the address given in register have been returned marked "Unknown". Last efforts made through Welfare Officer, and letter in December 1955 of no avail.

The usual procedure here is, the mother brings the infant along, has it admitted and promises to support it. She gives her address, which may not always be the correct one; possibly she is faithful to her promises for six months or one year, and then suddenly disappears.

**HIA 322** and **HIA 307** are both bright, intelligent boys, nice characters, and we feel they would



do justice to the opportunities given them in Australia.

Thanking you for everything, and if you feel there is anything we can do to facilitate matters let us know,

With kindest wishes,

Yours very sincerely and gratefully,

The Sisters of Nazareth.