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HIA REF: 183

Witness Name: HIA 183

THE INQUIRY INTO HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONAL ABUSE 1922 TO 1995

WITNESS STATEMENT OF HIA 183

I, HIA 183 will say as follows:-

Personal details

1. I was born on [REDACTED] I think I remained with my mother for the first six months of my life. I do not know anything about my father or mother. I do not know any details about why I was placed in care. I was placed in Fox Lodge on 8th January 1946 when I was six months old.

Nazareth Lodge Children's Home, Belfast (01/09/1951 – 12/08/1957)

2. [REDACTED]

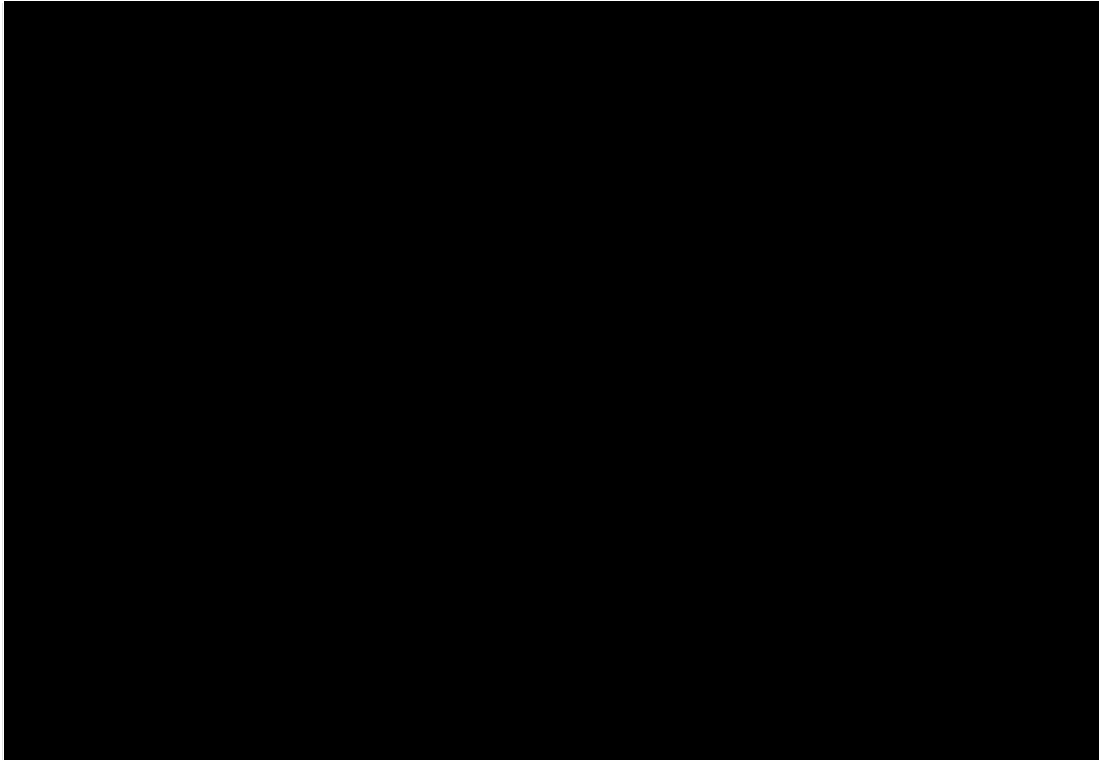
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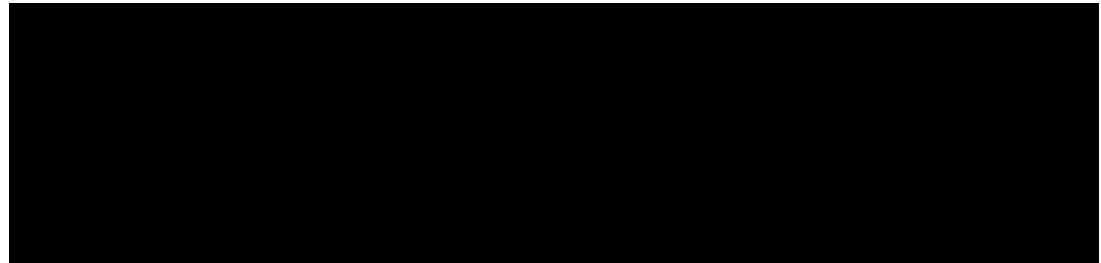
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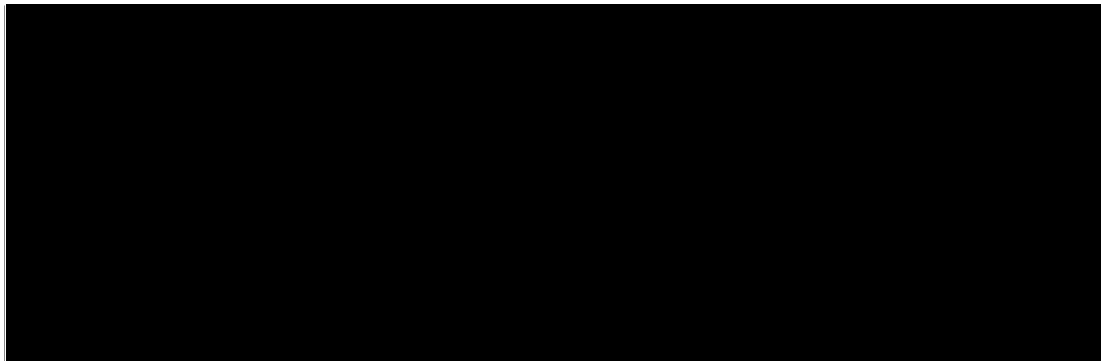
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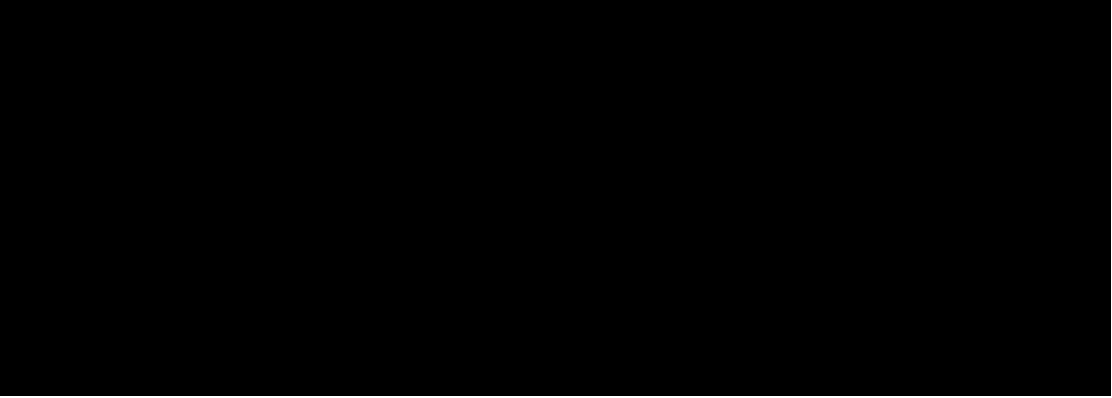


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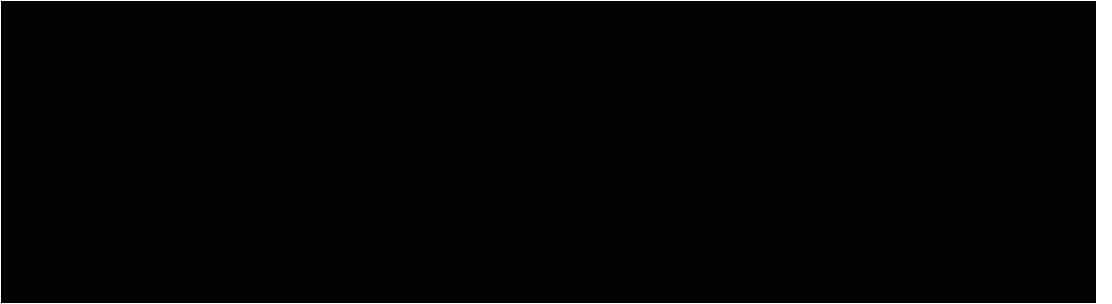
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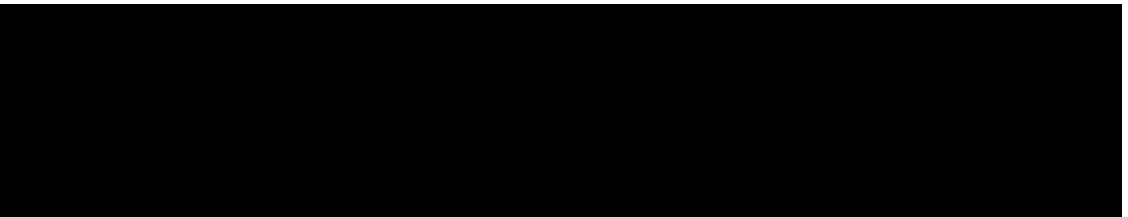
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De La Salle Boys' Home, Rubane House, Kircubbin (12/08/1957 – 13/07/1960)

13. I was transferred to Rubane House on 12th August 1957. Nazareth Lodge was horrendous and going to Rubane was like stepping out of the frying pan into the fire. Brother **BR 17** was in charge. He came to collect about twelve of us from Nazareth Lodge in a minivan. I was in a dormitory in the big house for a year or two. There were two or three dormitories in the big house with eight or nine boys in each one. After a while I was transferred to the smaller house near the farm. There were two dormitories in the smaller house.
14. I found Rubane very intimidating. We did not receive a good education. I think everyone was educationally slow. There was no competition and there was no extra help. I was in the choir and I could only read The Lord's Prayer in Latin because I was taught it.
15. There was a **BR 66** who was in Rubane for a couple of months when I first arrived. He had a lot of compassion. He was the only person who took time with us and realised the importance of education and made you feel important. He was the first person who taught me how to tell the time and he taught me how to write my name. I remember crying when he left. He was the only one who made me feel important and he made me realise how important it was to get an education. No one else seemed to care about our education. I think they thought we were damaged goods and were beyond teaching.
16. I also remember an occasion in school when **BR 17** called me to the front of the classroom and asked me what we were learning. I replied we were learning the hymn. He threw me over the table and beat me black and blue with his fists. This was because I said "hymn" instead of "Latin". One of the boys in the class eventually shouted out "it's Latin you're learning". So I said "it's Latin". He only stopped when I said that. I was sobbing really hard. I was not right for

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about two or three days. I was traumatised by this incident and I have never forgotten it.

17. After about three months **BR 17** took some of us into his office and questioned us about our family. I think he was trying to find out if the boys had anyone outside that they could talk to. He was covering his back so he knew who could be touched and who couldn't.
18. After about four or five months **BR 17** called me out of class along with **DL 396**, **DL 397** and **HIA 427**. We went to his office at the end of the corridor. He made the four of us strip naked. He sat at his desk pretending to write. He made us turn round to face the wall and then turn back again. He then told us to get dressed and go back to our class. It was demoralising and inhumane.
19. We would say the Rosary at 4.30 in the afternoon and then have Benediction. About half a dozen times **BR 17** told me to go up to his room afterward as he wanted to talk to me. He would make me take down my pants and lie on the bed. He would pretend to be examining me until I got aroused. He would then tell me to get dressed and leave. This happened about six times. I knew that it wasn't right but I had nobody to tell and I was afraid of telling anyone in case it got back to him.
20. There was one occasion when I was in bed in the smaller house. It was about midnight or one o'clock in the morning. A man came into the dormitory in a white sheet. He went round every bed, put his hands down the sheet and groped every boy in turn. There were about eight or nine boys in the dormitory. The last boy he groped let out a scream and the man in the white sheet ran into **BR 15** room. We therefore came to the conclusion it was **BR 15**. **BR 15** He was the only Brother who lived in the smaller house.
21. **BR 15** was also in charge of the clothes. I had buttons missing on my shorts once and I asked him if he could fix them. He brought me in to the dormitory and told me to keep the shorts on while he fixed the buttons. He fiddled with the shorts until I got aroused. The abuse went no further than that.

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22. There was another occasion when we were watching television. We were carrying on a bit and **BR 15** put all the boys in to the basement for two hours. This happened two or three times. There were about fifty or sixty boys. There was no heating and there was condensation on the walls. While we were down there some of the boys were still carrying on. **BR 15** came down to see who was carrying on. He picked out a boy called **DL 398** and hit him across the face with a bamboo cane. The blood was pouring out of him. **BR 15** then hit him across the legs and back. He could not sit down for a couple of days afterwards. **BR 15** had a vicious temper and I actually thought he got a kick out of it. I have never been able to forget that incident.
23. **DL 398** and I remained friends after we left care. We cycled together. His work colleagues called him **DL 398** because he could always fix things. I have always thought that if **DL 398** had had a proper upbringing he would have been a great engineer as he could have fixed anything. He was also a great photographer and he took my wedding photographs.
24. I received no stimulation at Rubane House. I was never picked for the football team and I could never get near the snooker table. I think I involved myself in so many activities when I was older like cycling, walking and golf to try to make up for not having much recreation when I was a child.

Life After Care

25. I left Rubane House in 1960 when I was fifteen years old. I remember leaving Rubane and walking down the road to get the bus to go to my first job. I had a suitcase with two of everything, two pairs of pants, two pairs of socks and one suit. It was the loneliest day of my life. I had no-one. I had no education and I was worried about how I was going to cope with the outside world.
26. I recall when I settled in to my lodgings after leaving Kircubbin I would wake up after having a nightmare thinking that I was still in Kircubbin. It was such a relief

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to then realise I was only dreaming and would never be going back to that awful place again.

27. The Nazareth Lodge Welfare Committee organised for me to stay in digs with a man called [REDACTED]. He owned a cafe where I worked as a chef. I stayed with him for over a year and then he organised digs for me in [REDACTED]. I knew that being a chef was not for me. I worked as a labourer and then I applied for an apprenticeship in [REDACTED] and trained as a [REDACTED]. I had my own business for 27 years and I retired three years ago. I got married in 1980 and I have three daughters and two grandchildren.
28. In the late 1970's, with the help of friends, I found my older, half-brother [REDACTED]. He had been adopted and had grown up in Dublin. He moved to London and now lives in [REDACTED]. He works as an [REDACTED]. I telephone him about once a year. I have relations in Dublin and I met my Aunt once. I do not keep in contact with any of them because I think they knew where I was and they did not come to get me. I do not know my mother or father.
29. I went to English classes and computer classes but I always dropped out as I could never keep up. I tried to teach myself instead. I still struggle in my writing and my maths but I can read. When I left care I was very sheltered and unable to relate to people. My best education was from my job as a [REDACTED] where I learned to relate to people.
30. I organise a reunion once a year and about 14 of us ex-residents meet up. I visit another ex-resident from the home who is now a recluse. He said to me once do you ever regret being born? That question really hit me and made me realise how much he is still suffering like so many other ex-residents.
31. I came forward to the Inquiry because I think there should be accountability. I do not think any child should have to suffer the miserable childhood I had. No parents, no love, no stability, no education. All I wanted was love and I never received it in either home. It took me a long time after I left care to learn how to love. I always mistrusted people. I was on tranquilisers for twenty five years but

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I have been off them now for about twenty years. Despite everything that has happened to me I feel I have been blessed since I left care as I have a good family and good health.

32. I believe the State should be held accountable for abandoning us and we should receive an explanation why this abandonment was ever allowed to happen. There was no help for us and no support given to the Brothers or Sisters to enable them to help us. I hope lessons are learned from this Inquiry and future generations never have to have the upbringing we endured.

Statement of Truth

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

Signed **HIA 183**

Dated 11/3/14

Meeting with [HIA 183] in Clonard

16/02/04 (4.00 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.)

Present: Fr. [] CSSR, [HIA 183], [BR 2], []

[HIA 183] was born [] and was admitted to Kircubbin from Nazareth Lodge on 12/08/57 and discharged on 13/07/60 to [DL 367] of After Care. He was training to be a chef but didn't like it and later trained to be []. He became involved in the Redemptorist Confraternity and the Legion of Mary. He has a great devotion to Our Lady and says the Rosary very day.

He is married and has three children: the eldest is [], the others are [] and []. His marriage had the usual ups and downs but his wife and himself respect one another

Through his work as [], he met a [] Lady, [], who was a Catholic but who was divorced and married a Presbyterian. She became fond of [HIA 183] and became a mother figure for him. She recommended him to all her friends. He asked Fr. [] to visit her, which he did and she became reconciled to the Church and they had a Mass and Communion with her friends, some of which were Church of England. They all received Communion.

Later she became ill and on one occasion when [HIA 183] visited, she passed some remark which [HIA 183] took as a criticism of him for neglecting her. This left him with a terrible feeling of guilt and he went to Fr. [] for counselling. Fr. [] told him that [] could have been under the effects of medication at the time and that he was probably misinterpreting her remark. In the course of his conversation with Fr. [] [HIA 183] spoke about his life which was devoid of love and confided in him for the first time how he was abused in Kircubbin. At a later stage Fr. [] suggested that he meet with representatives of the Brothers as part of the healing process and [HIA 183] agreed.

The atmosphere of the meeting was helped by the fact that [BR 2] knew [HIA 183] from Past Residents Reunions in Nazareth Lodge and knew many of the boys that were there with [HIA 183]. He was also familiar with Kircubbin as it was when [HIA 183] was there.

After the introductions, we allowed [HIA 183] to tell his story without interruption. He found it a difficult experience and broke down crying on a number of occasions.

[HIA 183] alleged he was abused by [BR 17] physically and sexually in Kircubbin between 1957 and 1960.

Summary from recollection

1. [BR 17]
 - a) [HIA 183] was in the choir and [BR 17] asked him to read something in Latin. He was unable to do it as he said he was unable to read even English at that time. [BR 17] gave him a terrible beating.
 - b) On the day [BR 17] brought the group of boys from Nazareth Lodge, he was put in the middle of the front seat of the minibus. [BR 17] told him to put one leg on either side of the gear lever and used the opportunity to touch him when he was changing the gears.

9. **Reporting**

- a) He could not tell anyone
- b) He remembered a top Brother coming on one occasion and meeting all the boys. He walked up and down the front of the building with HIA 183 and asked him if he was happy in Kircubbin. HIA 183 told him he was. He said he had come from Nazareth Lodge and had no family. If he reported, he was afraid he would be thrown out of Kircubbin and he would have no where to go to.
- c) In 1995, two detectives called on him and asked him about Kircubbin and if he had been abused there. It was just after the publicity about Fr. Brendan Smith and the Church was going through a bad time. He said that if he told them he was abused, it would only be grist to their mill.

10. **Effects of the Abuse:**

- a) Low self esteem
- b) Lack of education
- c) Difficulty of maintaining relationships

11. **What did he want of the Brothers?**

- a) **Counselling**
We offered him counselling but he said he did not believe in counselling. He had his faith and God would look after him.
- b) **Money**
When asked what could the Brothers do for him, he said "nothing". He did not want money. He said money could not repay him for what was done to him.
- c) **Future**
He said that he had just wanted to meet with representatives of the Order and make them aware of what happened to him and to make sure that this sort of thing would never happen again.
He also expressed a wish to meet with the Nazareth Lodge Sisters as part of the healing process.
He expressed his appreciation for the meeting and said that he found it helpful. We felt that HIA 183 was lucky to have Fr. [REDACTED] as a counsellor. He was very gentle with him and spoke highly of him even before we met him.. We encouraged HIA 183 to keep in contact, if he so wished. BR 2 gave him his address and phone number.

BR 15 was put in charge of the clothing. There was an incident when he gave me a pair of trousers. I put them on and discovered there was a button missing down the middle, so I took them off. He told me to put them back on, and proceeded to sew a button while I had my trousers on. It must have taken him twenty minutes to put the button on, need I tell you the rest.

There was a smaller house: it wasn't too far from the main house. The smaller house had two medium dormitories. **BR 15** was in charge of that house. There was one night a certain person came into the bedroom, in the middle of the night, with a white sheet over his body, He went around each bed and started groping, till one of the boys screamed. The person made a run for it, and headed for **BR 15**'s bedroom. Next morning we all came to the same conclusion: that it was **BR 15** up to no good

BR 17 the Brother Superior of the Home, called me into his office and told me to take a seat. He explained to me that I was going away for a few days, on a bit of a holiday to keep **DL 278** company.

DL 278 was one of the boys I assumed adopted. He was missing the boys out of the home. All I can remember is someone taking me to a bus stop, and telling the conductor where to leave me. I couldn't tell you the name of the town.

However this man came up to me and asked if my name was **HIA 183**. He had a pushbike, so he put me on the handlebar, so you can imagine I must have been very young.

All I can remember it was very early in the day. As he was cycling me to his home, and I was on the bar, he said to me, 'I am sure you are feeling a little tired'. I remember saying I was all right. When I got to his house we had a cup of tea, and it was straight to bed. It was very early in the day, and once we were in bed he started abusing me. I told him I wanted to go back to the home. Better with the devil that you know, than the devil you don't know.

HIA 183

Date: 16th October 2009.

HIA 183

24/2/2013

[REDACTED]

September 19th 2009

Rev. [REDACTED] **BP 5**
 Provincial, De La Salle Bothers,
 121 Howth Road,
 Dublin .

Dear [REDACTED] **BP 5**

The publication of the Ryan Report has re-opened for me old wounds – the whole can of worms of my life in Kircubbin. I was taken there from Nazareth Lodge by Bro. **BR 17** when I was about 9 – already a very wounded boy.

I am now 64, married to [REDACTED] since 1980 with three daughters – [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] is now married to [REDACTED] and they have two little girls. Coming to terms with my experience there has become harder as I have grown older. Some years ago I met **BR 3** in Clonard Monastery. That led to a meeting in Dublin which left me as I was.

After leaving Kircubbin I had great problems settling down. I had frightening nightmares about the Home. In my dreams I would be terrified thinking I was still inside and unable to escape. Then waking up I'd realize that I was outside.

I had no identity or self-confidence in dealing with people. I could not fill in a form and was barely able to write my own name. I was put on tranquillizers by Dr Damien Byrne and Dr Delargy and was addicted to them for near 30 years. The grace of God and a book by Dr Venor weaned me off my addiction and freed me from the zombie existence I which I tried to kill the pain of the past.

In Kircubbin I was sexually abused by **BR 17** – always after Evening Prayers. He would bring me to his room and then pretend to examine me until I had an erection. He did this about 13 times. The memory of this abuse still haunts and humiliates me. The pain of this has become sharper as I have grown older. I still find it hard to sustain a relationship. I have never come to terms with the inhumanity of the experience.

Once day at a choir practice **BR 17** wrote in Latin on the blackboard. I think it was the "Pater Noster". Then he called me to the front to read the piece. Being unable even to read English, I could not grasp the Latin. I just stood there. He got angry and asked me what was written on the blackboard. I said "A song". With that he laid into me opposite all the boys. He punched me all over for a long time. He lifted me up and threw me across the table. I was a physical wreck after the beating and sobbed for the first time in my life. It took me ages to get over the humiliation of that beating. At another time I got a severe beating from **BR 14** for a trivial thing – I think it was not being quick enough cleaning my teeth.

I used to feel very hurt at being excluded from sports – billiards, table tennis and football. I was never picked on a team. I realize that there was only one billiard and table tennis table among many boys, but the pain of being always excluded and the favouritism shown to some boys drained me of self-worth. I do not remember ever being praised in Kircubbin Home.

Being illiterate when leaving was a huge handicap. I have struggled to educate myself down the years but the trauma of Kircubbin has affected my brain. I make progress in learning very slowly. I came to realize more keenly the deprivation of my childhood in Kircubbin as I watched my own children grow up. Thank God, they have done well in life and my wife [REDACTED] has understood my trauma and given me space over the years to progress at my own pace.

I have a very good memory of [REDACTED] BR 66 who taught me for a month or so. Had I him as my teacher for my years in Kircubbin my life would have been very different. But sadly it was not so.

I feel greatly wronged by the experiences I have described above. I now believe that I am entitled to some remuneration and recompense for the great injustices done to me in Kircubbin Home.

Yours sincerely,

HIA 183