

## **Institutional Child Abuse – Testimony of James Reeves**

My name is James Reeves. I was born in 1946. I was in a children's home called Beecholme, in Banstead, Surrey. I was in a house in the children's home called Jasmine. I think I was 7 years old - had spent younger years in foster care. I can remember their names - the Porters. My foster dad wasn't involved in abuse that I remember it's the only thing I remember about foster carers except on one birthday my foster dad bought me a brown 3 wheel tricycle. I can remember standing on the kitchen table just a cloth nappy on being abused by women and grown up children, being locked in some cupboard for hours every day that's all I can remember from foster care.

My next memory is Beecholme, Jasmine house. I was taken there by a woman who handed me over to the House Mistress of Jasmine House. That woman who took me to Jasmine House was my mother. The next time we would meet was when I was 12. I was shown into a dining room then stripped naked, was beaten on my bottom hard by the House Mistress, Miss Cullen. I was then taken into a large bathroom with 2 baths end to end. The bathroom was crowded with other naked boys and girls, one bath was for boys, the other was for girls. The water was never changed. There were 2 other female staff in there; one Miss Malden, the other Miss Kilbane (who was lovely throughout my stay and had no hand in any of my abuses). After bath, we were marched out up the stairs to our dormitories. It must have been not more than 20 minutes later, I remember being pulled roughly out of my bed by a man who took my nightshirt off and took me downstairs. I was told to face the wall, opposite a room which was occupied by people. Every time any one came out of that room I was slapped hard on my bare bum. I was standing facing the wall for what seemed like ages, then I heard people leaving the room and going out the front door. I was then blind-folded and taken into that room and sexually assaulted by 2 people. One tried to bugger me, but stopped when I screamed. Next I remember something hard being put in my mouth. I was crying and shaking with fear, I was so scared. I was told to suck on the thing in my mouth, but was whacked round the head. I heard one person say "He's no good - his teeth are digging in". I was then taken back to my dormitory and put into bed, told not to look round or I would get it. The person removed the blindfold. I was frozen, scared, crying. Then I heard the door shut. I lay there scared to move. I must have fallen asleep.

We were woken up by Miss Malden, the other staff member. I tried to speak to her but she would not listen to me. I tried to talk to Miss Cullen who seemed in charge of Jasmine House. She pulled me into her office and told me "Children who lie are sent away to bad places. Is that what you want?". I remember saying "No Miss".

I know they had a school there but can't seem to think about that. I remember we were all at our tables for tea. After tea, Miss Cullen used to put her chair in the middle of the dining room floor and call us boys to stand in line. She then would one-by-one strip us and spank our bottoms hard in front of the girls. This happened every night after tea, 7 days of every week. Other times at dinner, puddings were served. 10 times while I was there they served figs and custard. I was eating a fig it was horrible and I was sick all over my pudding, and was forced to eat it. Other times I was sick over figs and custard, Miss Kilbane (when she saw Miss Cullen go) would come and remove it and give me a cuddle. She seemed helpless and - I don't know - I'm sure a few times she had tears in her eyes.

I never saw men in the house during the day, only at nights when they used to take me downstairs and repeat their abuse. God knows how many other boys there were abused like me, at nights. It was no good complaining, no one would listen to me. One day I was told I was leaving, to be taken to another children's home. I was picked up by car by a LCC Social Worker. I was driven to Hutton children's residential home, in Shenfield, Essex. I was taken into a large house, called Thames. All the other houses were named after rivers. I was never sexually abused there by any staff members. Though one boy was, in a different house and his abuser Mr Brabbon was sentenced to six month prison.

Whilst there somehow some of us were invited to the Billy Cotton Band Show Christmas party, which was shown on BBC television. I was one of the kids who went. It was late 1950's or early 1960's. I can remember being seated at the tables full of food. There was Russ Conway, a woman singer and my abuser Alan Breeze. I didn't know his name at the time. I asked Russ Conway his name. It happened in the men's toilets. I was in there when Alan Breeze said "You going to toilet?". I said "Yes". "Let me help you." he said and started touching my penis. He had his hand down my trousers holding my bum. I was trying to pull away, when someone else entered the toilet. I think he saw what was happening and he pulled me away, and sent me out of the toilet. As I left I complained to someone - a man - about what happened. He told me to go away and sit down, which I did. I was so upset and angry. I tried telling Billy Cotton but couldn't get near him or Russ Conway anymore. I tried to tell staff at the home, but they laughed and walked away.

From that day, I was totally confused and felt alone. It got so bad I was taken to The Maudsley hospital, who after listening to my story told the person who took me there they wanted to keep me in. On hearing that, I ran out of the hospital and was found by my taker outside a big hospital opposite. I was crying and said "No one believes me! I am not staying in that place!". I was taken back to the home and put on anti-depressants. I have never forgotten my abuse - it still haunts me to this day.