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130 private schools in child abuse scandal

Attacks on hundreds of boys at elite establishments

Andrew Norfolk
Chief Investigative Reporter

Teachers at 130 independent schools have been implicated in sex crimes against hundreds of children, an analysis by *The Times* reveals today. Experts warn of a looming scandal over the abuse of boys in boarding schools during the past half century.

The list features dozens of Britain's leading public schools as well as 20 elite prep schools that regularly send children to Eton College. Included are 64 mainstream private-sector establishments, most of them boarding schools, where at least one male teacher has been convicted of sexually abusing boys, and a further 30 at which a member of staff was sentenced for possessing child abuse images.

Analysis of past crimes, scandals and police investigations at 130 schools reveals a significant surge in criminal prosecutions since 2012, often for offences that happened many years ago. Should the pattern continue, it is likely to damage schools' reputations and finances. With annual boarding fees averaging £27,000, many are increasingly reliant on income from the 25,400 foreign pupils who occupy more than a third of boarding school beds.

Across the UK, about 6.5 per cent of schoolchildren are educated in the independent sector. Fifty of the 253 independent schools that make up the Headmasters and Headmistresses'

Conference (HMC), Britain's private-sector elite, have been connected with child abuse.

One specialist linked the significant growth in complaints to an increasing national awareness of the lasting damage caused by such crimes. Britain's middle classes had belatedly decided that it is "socially respectable" to discuss childhood abuse, it was claimed, while the head of a victims' campaign group suggested that traditional male "stiff upper lip" attempts to shrug aside sexual trauma were increasingly viewed as outdated. In the past 20 years, one or more men who taught at 62 independent schools, including Haberdashers' Aske's, Ampleforth, Wellington College, King Edward's School Birmingham and The Oratory School, Reading, have been convicted of sex crimes — from indecent assault to gross indecency and buggery — against 277 male pupils.

Prosecutions involving 18 of those 62 schools came to court in the past two years. Former teachers from a further four independent schools have been charged and are awaiting trial.

Eton, Marlborough, Millfield, Oundle and Tonbridge are among 30 other schools where a male teacher has been convicted of possessing child abuse images. Downside School, Somerset, features in both categories. Another 36 private-sector schools have been linked to child abuse. They

Continued on page 9, col 1



Bling is back Donatella Versace's flamboyantly embellished creations kicked off the four days of Paris Fashion Week last night in spectacular style. News, page 15

I need time, Hollande tells 'broken' first lady

Adam Sage Paris

President Hollande has told France's first lady that he needs time to decide whether to end their relationship, according to the magazine that is determined to give her side of the story.

In the latest account of the rift in the Élysée Palace, *Paris Match* reports that Valérie Trierweiler is a broken woman, fearful about her future as her semi-official role at the apex of the French State draws to an end.

"Devastated, humiliated, she has been caught between her immense distress and her impetuosity; her questions about her future and her anger," the magazine reported. "Today

François can't be faithful, Ségolène warned Valérie

World, page 33

Valérie Trierweiler is perhaps at the end of a journey."

The article was signed by Catherine Schwaab, a deputy editor at the French weekly where Ms Trierweiler still works as a book reviewer.

According to Ms Schwaab, the President met his partner in hospital on Thursday night and refused to make a commitment to either of his lovers. "What are they waiting for? That's the whole problem," Ms Schwaab wrote.

Ms Trierweiler left hospital on Saturday and, rather than returning to her quarters in the Élysée, she was taken to La Laterne, a presidential residence in Versailles.

President Hollande spent the weekend at his power base in Corrèze, in southwest France, still ducking questions about his relationship with Julie Gayet, 41, a film actress, which was disclosed by another magazine, *Closer*.

At a press conference last week, he promised to clarify Ms Trierweiler's status before a state visit to the US next month.

IN THE NEWS

New Rennard threat

The latest activist to complain that she was harassed by Lord Rennard has said that she will leave the Liberal Democrats if the peer wins back the party whip today. News, page 4

Brave husband killed

A British yachtsman on an around-the-world trip has been found dead in the sea off St Lucia. Police said he had been defending his wife from robbers. News, page 5

Talks 'an Assad ploy'

Residents of besieged suburbs in Damascus warned that the Syrian Government was trying to manipulate peace talks in Switzerland with hollow offers of ceasefire. World, page 30

Chris Chataway dies

Chris Chataway, a pacemaker during Roger Bannister's 1954 sub-four-minute mile record and later a Tory minister and businessman, has died aged 82. Obituary, page 50; Sport, page 61

Hat-trick sinks United

A Samuel Eto'o hat-trick gave Chelsea a 3-1 home victory over Manchester United. David Moyes said that his team "have to improve all round". the game, pages 2-5

