

# Closed worlds where abusers

Prep and public schools were places of torment for many vulnerable and lonely pupils, Andrew Norfolk writes

Because it was the done thing, parents once paid handsomely to place their young sons in the spartan care of strangers who were, in some cases, career specialists in the stealing of childhoods. Of the 253 schools of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, the elite of the private sector, *The Times* names 50 today in connection with sex abuse, and 20 prep schools that are feeder schools for Eton.

A global reputation for providing an outstanding quality of education has earned British independent schools an OECD ranking as the best in the world, alongside their counterparts in New Zealand and South Korea. Such accolades hide dark secrets.

Former teachers at 62 independent schools have been convicted in the past two decades — including 18 cases since 2012 — of sex crimes against pupils.

At 30 other schools, staff were found to have computer child abuse images or illegal videos. Sex abuse allegations have been made about 36 other private-sector schools.

At Lord Wandsworth College, Hampshire, in 1966, a boy who was sexually abused by Patrick Nott, a deputy

housemaster, complained to other teachers. Police were not informed. It took another 35 years before Nott was jailed for crimes against that child and 12 other boarders.

In 2003, Peter Hamilton-Legg was jailed for eight years for 54 offences against 19 boys in the 1970s and 1980s. He picked on boys aged from 7 to 14 who were bullied, lonely and homesick, abusing 13 at the Old Ride prep school, Wiltshire, and another six at Lambrook prep school, Berkshire.

One of his victims later attempted suicide; others spoke of a lasting inability to form normal adult relationships.

Detectives said that when he was questioned many years later, the retired teacher attempted to blame the children for the crimes he committed against them.

Between the 1960s and the 1990s, at least 26 boys were abused by three priests at Ampleforth College's Junior House and its nearby prep school, Gilling Castle. When concerns were raised at the North Yorkshire schools, two priests were quietly moved.

Such tales of betrayed childhoods are not all ancient history. Last month, a music teacher at King Edward's School, Birmingham, was jailed for three years and eight months. Philip Evans indecently assaulted seven boys and secretly filmed others in rugby changing rooms at the school.

When he was exposed, police found 350,000 indecent images of children on his computer. His crimes, which continued until August last year, were de-



Eton: a master had indecent images

scribed by a judge as a "repulsive, disgusting and deceitful" breach of parental trust. The list goes on. There have been so many offenders, who worked at so many independent schools over so many decades.

Most taught in those institutions at a time when there was zero awareness of the impact of the abuse, of its capacity to dismantle a child's sense of balance and belonging. Many victims carry to this day an indelible sense of shame, guilt and confusion.

Damaged boys became men who coped by seeking to block all memory of childhood abuse or shrugging it aside, telling drunken tales of being abused by their housemaster and none

the worse for it.

When his memoir was published last autumn, Richard Dawkins, the biologist who is also Britain's most outspoken atheist, sought to diminish the harm caused by "mild paedophilia" in boarding schools and warned that "You can't condemn people of an earlier era by the standards of ours".

He was indecently assaulted by a teacher at his Salisbury prep school, he claimed, as were many of his young contemporaries, but he did not believe the man "did any of us any lasting damage". Others beg to differ.

John Hurt, the actor, was "hugely affected" by the abuse he claims was perpetrated by a senior master at his Kent prep school, who regularly inserted his tongue into young boys' mouths.

"You just accepted what was happening then. If it happened now he'd be behind bars."

The late campaigner Paul Foot accused Anthony Chenevix-Trench, his former housemaster at Shrewsbury School, of gaining sexual pleasure from the "sensuous fingering of his pupils' bare buttocks" during regular punishment beatings in his private quarters.

"The notorious flogger", as he was described by Richard Ingrams, the former editor of *Private Eye*, who was also at Shrewsbury, went on to become headmaster of Bradfield College, Berkshire, and then of Eton, where growing concerns about his beatings would later force his resignation.

However, Chenevix-Trench was soon appointed headmaster of Fettes

College, Edinburgh. He was again facing enforced removal from his post when he died in 1979. As recently as 1998, police confirmed receipt of a complaint about him from a former Fettes pupil.

Few would suggest that in 2014, with its heightened focus on child protection, more rigorous school inspections and more strictly-enforced safeguarding policies, a 12-year-old boarder is as likely to be abused as were his father or grandfather 30 or 60 years ago.

Those who represent the independent education sector are understandably keen to stress that most of the crimes listed today by *The Times* happened 10, 20, 30, 40 or even 50 years ago.

It would be a brave or foolish person, however, who voiced confidence that no young boy at a British boarding school will this year become the focus of a teacher's sexual attention. Teachers at nine independent schools have been convicted of abuses committed this century.

For all the increased awareness of childhood vulnerability, and the e-mails and mobile phones that keep today's boarders in far more regular contact with home, a public school will always remain a world unto itself.

The hope is that tomorrow's abusers are swiftly identified and exposed but if today's schoolboys take as long as their predecessors before speaking out, it will be many years before we learn whether the 21st-century British boarding school is as safe as its publicists believe.

# groomed boys with impunity

## Ex-teacher tells of his shame over 'evil acts'

Andrew Norfolk

A man convicted of sexually abusing two boys at a prep school more than 40 years ago spoke yesterday of "an overwhelming sense of shame" that will stay with him for rest of his life.

The prosecution of the former teacher, who later became an ordained Christian minister, was one of 43 court cases in the past ten years in which staff from independent schools have been sentenced for sex offences against boys.

Now aged in his late sixties and speaking to *The Times* on condition of anonymity, the man said he was shattered to learn, after his arrest, of the lasting damage he had caused to children who were under 13 when he indecently assaulted them in a school dormitory.

"All I can do is pray for forgiveness. If I could speak to them, I'd say I was heartbroken to realise the effect it has had on you. What happened was entirely my responsibility. You were the ones who were abused."

The former teacher was in his early twenties and a deputy housemaster when he committed the crimes, for which he was belatedly given a suspended prison sentence. He immediately knew he had done something wrong. After apologising to the children, they "said they wouldn't take it any further" and he "thought it had been laid to rest".

A court heard that the two victims, now middle-aged, "were still living with what happened over 40 years ago and continued to blame themselves despite the passage of time".

The man's bedroom at the English prep school was next to the boys' dormitory. The three offences to which he pleaded guilty were indecently touching each child and kissing one on the lips.

At his sentencing, his barrister said that at the time of the abuse the teacher was "immature and impetuous and struggling with his own sexuality". The offences were never repeated, she said.

Four decades later, the man described the "heart-stopping moment" when police finally knocked on his door. He was arrested and held in police cells before being questioned by detectives. "I didn't take a solicitor. I wanted to tell the truth. It's heart-breaking to think that any child could ever be afraid of me. I knew there was truth in the allegations, albeit our memories of what happened were not exactly the same.

"On reflection, I certainly knew I'd done something of which I was ashamed. I pleaded guilty because there was no way I was going to put them through the ordeal of giving evidence in a public trial."

The man, a teacher for 14 years before his ordination, said he spent most of the sentencing hearing in tears. Only one of the two victims was in court and he was unable to see him from the dock.

"The judge said I'd committed evil acts. That was a horrendous thing to hear. What's stayed with me is the shame, the guilt, the breach of trust and the overwhelming sense of having let people down.

"I was very immature and I didn't think about any of that at the time."

Independent schools and child abuse

130 Independent schools linked to abuse

71 Teachers convicted of abuse at 64 schools

289 Boys abused by teachers

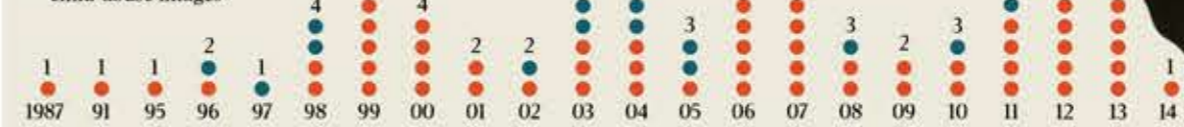
When the abuse happened

(for sexual offences against pupils)



Year by year: schools where teachers convicted

sexual offences (red dot), possession of child-abuse images (blue dot)



### Schools where teachers were convicted of sexual offences against boys

- Ampleforth College, Junior House, N Yorkshire  
Date abused: 70s/80s/90s  
Involving: 2 teachers/ 11 pupils  
Most recent conviction: Sep 2005
- Bedford Modern School, Bedfordshire  
80s (1/1) Sep 2006
- Beeston Hall prep school, Cromer, Norfolk  
70s (1/12) Aug 2013
- Belmont Abbey School, Herefordshire  
80s (1/3) Apr 2004
- Birkdale School, Sheffield, South Yorkshire  
70s (1/2) Dec 2002
- Blue Coat prep school, Birmingham  
60s/70s (1/2) Jan 2014
- Boundary Oak prep school, Fareham, Hampshire  
70s/80s (1/7) Aug 2013
- Buckfast Abbey prep school, Devon  
70s/80s/90s (2/10) Nov 2007
- Caldicott prep school, Farnham Royal, Bucks  
50s/60s/70s (4/15) Dec 2013
- Clayesmore prep school, Blandford Forum, Dorset  
80s (1/1) May 2013
- Clifton College prep school, Bristol  
90s (1/1) Mar 2008
- Crookham Court, Newbury, Berkshire  
80s (4/8) Apr 2012
- Dollar Academy, Clackmannanshire  
70s/80s (1/4) Mar 2007
- Downside School, near Bath, Somerset  
80s (1/2) Jan 2012
- Dulwich College prep school, London  
70s (1/1) Jun 2000
- Gayhurst prep school, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks  
50s (1/3) May 2012
- Gilling Castle prep school, Ampleforth, N Yorkshire  
60s/70s (1/15) Jan 2006
- Haberdashers' Aske's School, Elstree, Hertfordshire  
70s/80s (1/3) May 2010
- Hereford Cathedral School  
00s (1/1) Nov 2010
- Holmewood House prep school, Tunbridge Wells, Kent  
80s (1/2) Apr 2007
- Holmwood prep school, Colchester, Essex  
80s (1/1) Jul 2009
- Junior King's School, Canterbury, Kent  
90s (1/3) Mar 2000
- King Edward's School, Birmingham  
00s (1/7) Dec 2013
- The King's School, Rochester, Kent  
80s (1/2) Jul 2012
- Knossington Grange prep school, Oakham, Leics  
60s/70s (1/4) Jan 2007
- Lambrook prep school, Ascot, Berkshire  
70s (1/6) Jun 2003
- Leeds Grammar School  
80s (1/1) Jun 2000
- Lichfield Cathedral School, Staffordshire  
70s/80s (1/3) Aug 2004
- Lord Wandsworth College, Hook, Hampshire  
60s (1/13) May 2001
- Malsis prep school, Skipton, North Yorkshire  
70s/80s (1/3) Jan 1996
- Moor Park prep school, Ludlow, Shropshire  
80s (1/4) Sep 2012
- Moreton End prep school, Harpenden, Hertfordshire  
70s/80s/90s (1/8) Oct 1991
- Nevill Holt prep school, Market Harborough, Leics  
70s/80s (1/6) Jun 1998
- Old Ride prep school, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire  
70s/80s (1/13) Jun 2003
- The Oratory School, Reading, Oxfordshire  
80s (1/3) Dec 2013
- Papplewick prep school, Ascot, Berkshire  
80s (1/2) 1999
- Penninorpe School, Horsham, West Sussex  
70s (1/1) Jul 2012
- Quainton Hall prep school, Harrow, London  
60s/70s (1/5) Nov 2011
- Redrice College, Andover, Hampshire  
70s (1/2) Oct 1999
- Rossall School, Fleetwood, Lancashire  
70s (1/2) Jul 2011
- The Royal School, Wolverhampton  
80s (1/4) May 1987
- St Bede's College, Manchester  
70s/80s (1/6) Oct 2008
- St Benedict's School, Ealing, London  
70s/80s/90s/00s (3/10) Dec 2011
- St George's School, Wicklewood, Norfolk  
70s/80s (2/13) Jul 2012
- St Joseph's College, Dumfries  
70s (1/2) nb became a state school in 1981  
May 1998
- St Mary's Hall prep school, Stonyhurst, Lancashire  
70s & 90s (1/3) nb conviction later quashed Feb 2000
- St Michael's prep school, Barnstaple, Devon  
70s/80s (1/1) Dec 1999
- St Paul's Cathedral Choir School, London  
80s (2/9) May 2009
- St Peter's prep school, Seaford, East Sussex  
60s/70s (1/10) Dec 2013
- Sidcot School, Winscombe, Somerset  
00s (1/1) Jan 2013
- Stoke Brunswick prep school, E Grinstead, West Sussex  
70s (1/2) C Oct 1999
- Vernon Holme prep school, Canterbury, Kent  
70s/80s (1/4) Jul 2003
- Wellington College, Crowthorne, Berkshire  
00s (1/3) Jul 2012
- West Hill Park School, Titchfield, Hampshire  
90s (1/1) Dec 2011
- Winterfold House prep school, Kidderminster, Worcs  
80s (1/7) Dec 2013



Interactive map  
REVEALED  
The full list of schools  
thetimes.co.uk/uknews

## Scandal at 130 schools

Continued from page 1

include as yet unresolved prosecutions, civil actions for damages following an alleged abuser's death, teachers convicted of abusing boys unconnected to their school, and police investigations that led to arrests but no charges.

In this category are Harrow, Sedburgh and Durham schools, all raided in the late 1990s during a nationwide investigation into an alleged paedophile network of teachers at six leading public schools. A teacher at each school was questioned and material including photographs, videos, letters and computer equipment was seized. No one was prosecuted due to lack of evidence.

In several cases that led to convictions, it later emerged that independent schools sought to protect their reputation by covering up potential scandals, allowing teachers to move to other schools where their crimes continued.

In a few cases, schools where teachers abused boys cannot be named, even years later, because court orders prohibit their identification. They include two leading London public schools.

Keir Starmer, QC, until last year the Director of Public Prosecutions, said that the list would strengthen the case for a mandatory requirement that schools to report all suspected abuse. The move is being resisted by the Gov-

ernment. Mr Starmer said: "During the past 18 months we spread the message that those who report such crimes will be listened to by police and prosecutors. I sense that people today feel they will be taken more seriously."

Peter Saunders, chief executive of the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC), said the organisation has received "many dozens" of calls from former public schoolboys "who have finally acknowledged what happened to them and want to do something about it".

"There's a particular vulnerability in boys' boarding schools. Boys find it more difficult than girls to talk about their feelings. They're brainwashed into believing that boys don't cry. A barrier goes up but finally, in some cases 10 or 20 years after they left school, it

seems to be coming down." Richard Scorer, a partner at Pannone Solicitors, which specialises in child abuse cases and currently represents former pupils of "at least 20" independent schools, said the Jimmy Savile scandal "has made talking about childhood abuse more socially respectable. That's particularly true for the middle classes."

The Independent Schools Council (ISC), whose 1,223 schools, including HMC schools, educate 80 per cent of Britain's private-sector pupils, said the "abuse of trust by a small number of predatory individuals" in its schools was "a matter of the very deepest regret". A spokesman said: "While these cases are largely historic, this does not in any way lessen the anguish felt by the innocent victims."

andrew.norfolk@thetimes.co.uk

Payday's weeks away. Let's book a holiday.

Now you can pay by installments with our Holiday Deposits. To Fly. To Serve.

Sale ends 28 Jan at ba.com/holidays

BRITISH AIRWAYS  
Holidays



Deposits are only available for bookings in excess of £1,000 and are available 11 weeks prior to departure. Full payment is required 10 weeks prior to departure. For all booking conditions visit ba.com/holidays. Availability of holidays on this site may be extremely limited, particularly during peak periods. Bookings must be made by midnight on 31/12/14 for travel between 31/12/14 and 31/12/14. Holidays are ATOL protected (number ATOL 5985). For selected destinations, eligible travel dates and conditions visit ba.com/holidays