

# **SOCIAL WORK CAREER**

- 1979 1991 Residential social work - Qualified as Social Worker 1983
- 1991-95 Social Worker, Children and Families -Practice Teacher
- 1995-1998 Social Work Trainer/Practice Teacher - NIPQA
- 1998-2000 Social Worker- Family and Child Care
- 2000-02 Senior Practitioner - Children and Families
- 2002-09 Team Leader - Leadership Award
- 2009-18 Social Work Service Manager – included “Dream Job”
- 2019 – Independent Social Work Consultant

**“Do not judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again.”**

**Nelson Mandela**

**I am David and I was also homeless**

**My experience of Homelessness,  
Adversity, Trauma, Hope, Resilience,  
Survival and Peace of Mind.**

# Our House as it stands today



# My residential care and homeless history

- **1960 and 1961** – Brefne Nursery.
- **1962 and 1963** – Williamson House.
- **1963 - Mother walked out** - Never saw or heard of her again.
- **January 1965 – August 1968** - Nazareth Lodge
- **1970 - Father moved to England** - Never saw him again.
- **August 1968 - May 1972** - Rubane House
- **May 1972** – discharged to a boarding house aged 15

# Nazareth Lodge



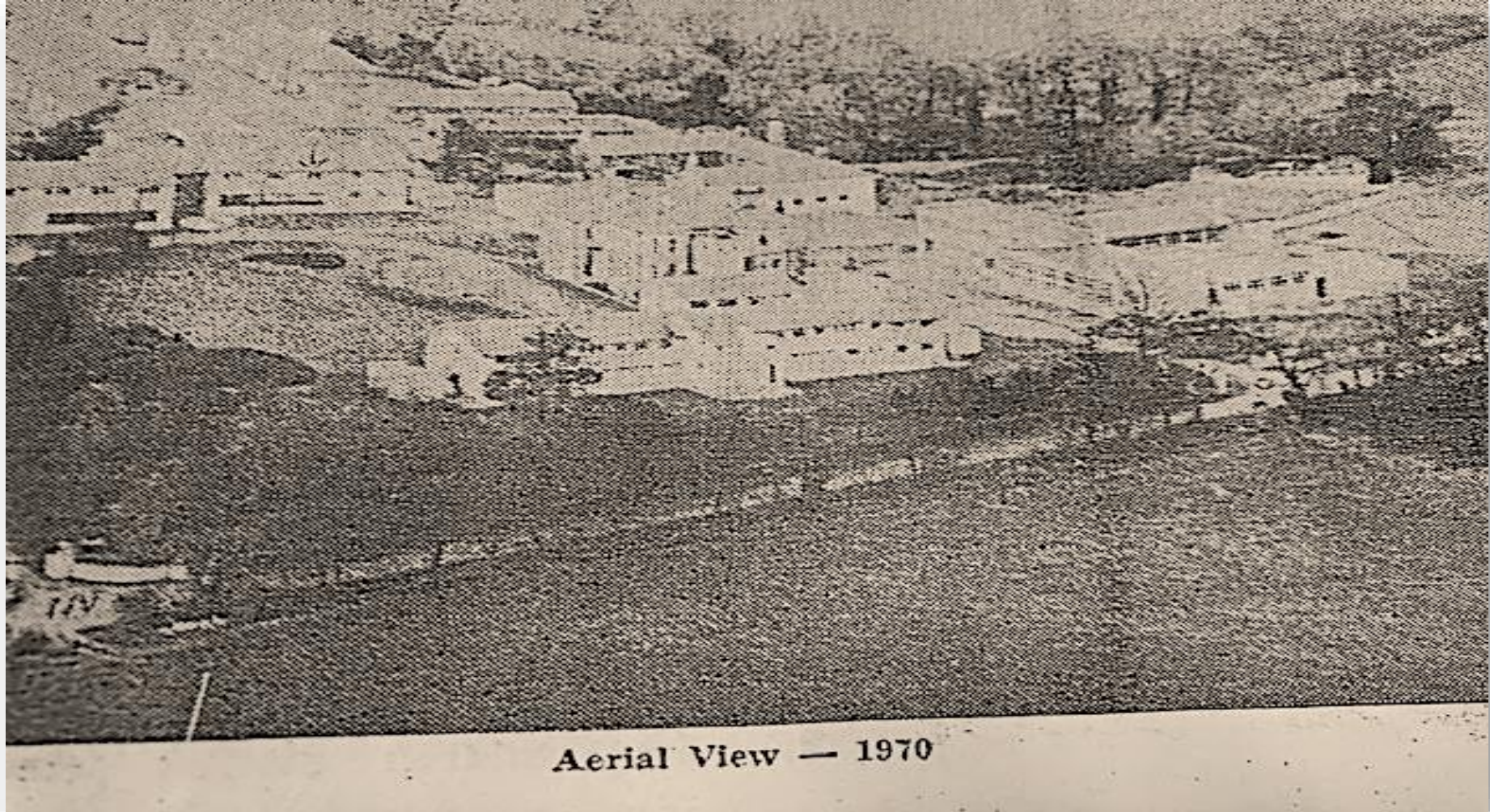
# Rubane House

**“Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'.”**

**Victor Frankl**



# Ariel View Rubane



Aerial View — 1970

# Discharged here aged 15

- As it stands today



State made me homeless and I had to make my own way in life and find a home of my own. Unregulated placement

# Beginning of post traumatic growth

- 1974-75 Decided to pursue education. 5 O Levels.
- 1976-78 Despite that achievement, things weren't good. Drinking excessively, unable to sustain relationships. Lonely, anxious, not coping, very vulnerable, emotional freefall.
- 1978 Couldn't cope with life and my abuse experiences. Attempted to take my life.
- Wanted to find a way to survive and cease being a victim. Had to escape from it all and go it alone. Couldn't deal with my sibling's issues as well as my own.
- 1979 Commenced career in social work

**“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.”**

**C.G. Jung**

# HIA Enquiry



**“Man’s inner strength may raise him above his fate.”**

**Victor Frankl**

# Summary of my experiences

- Sexually abused by bigger boys and men, in care
  - Sexually assaulted by several men, groomed and raped by 2.
  - Pursued girls endlessly trying to prove I wasn't gay.
  - Nervous breakdown at 21, tried to take my life
  - Wake-up call wanted to stop seeing myself as victim and wanted to be a survivor
  - Commenced social work
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- 2013 - Heard about HIA on the radio – Traumatized all over again
  - Gave evidence to the enquiry on 2 occasions
  - Further traumatic experience – anxiety - depression
  - GP prescribed Citalopram
  - Counselling at NEXUS
  - No longer feel shame and can live with past

# What became of my once close-knit family?

- **Father** Deceased.
- **Mother** Don't know (can only assume she's deceased)
- **Sister** Bi-Polar. Haven't seen or heard of her 14 years.
- **Brother** Habitual criminal. Haven't seen or or heard of him 45 years.
- **Sister** Australia. Anorexic alcoholic. Haven't seen her 30 years.
- **Sister** Mental health issues. Haven't seen or heard of her 13 years.
- **Sister** Poor Mental health. Took her life aged 42.
- **Brother** Took his life aged 26.

**“Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them”.**

**Dalai Lama**

# Who made a difference to me

- Befrienders
- Final Social Worker
- My wife and daughter
- A Manager
- Nexus Counsellor
- Social Work Lecturer
- ACES Trauma Trainer

**“I could not survive by going it alone and needed connections and relationships to fulfil your journey”.**

**David Gillen**

# What can you do to help people who are homeless like I was

- Make Positive connections – be honest, trustworthy, reliable
- Help me tell my story in my time and my way
- Help me believe in myself
- Help me develop resilience, hope and aspirations
- Be available during my good, sad and bad times
- Be compassionate and remember I'm a real person
- I didn't need a cure I needed to learn how to live with trauma
- Help me access therapeutic support services, when I need them
- I was once a Victim, became a Survivor and now I'm a Thrivers

**My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humour, and some style.**

Maya Angelou