

## Voices of Volunteering: 75 Years of Citizenship and Service

**Interview Transcript**

**Title Page**

**Ref. No.:** NAYC

**Collection Title:** Voices of Volunteering

**Interviewee's Surname:** Naylor

**Title:** Mrs

**Interviewee's Forenames:** Caroline

**Gender:** F

**Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:**

Volunteer 1990-1999

Employee 1999-2001

1990-1994 – North East Area Hospital Organiser

1994-1995 – Volunteer Trainer, North East

1995-1999 – Company Member

1999-2001 – Training Manager (Employee) North East

2001-2004 – Trustee, National

2004-2008 – Joint Vice Chairman with Val Everett, National

**Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To):** 07/05/2014 (Track 1)

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**Interviewer's Notes:**

Caroline Naylor (CN) talks about her time as an Area Hospital Organiser for WRVS in 1990, how she then went on to become a volunteer trainer and from that put herself forward as a company member. CN then talks about being a paid volunteer trainer, a trustee and the Vice Chairman's Committee (VCC). Her final comments are on her time as vice chairman with Val Everett (VE), why she left WRVS/Royal Voluntary Service and what she thinks of the organisation today.

**[Jennifer Hunt]: Okay, this is Jennifer Hunt with Caroline Naylor on the seventh of May 2014 at The Royal Voluntary Service Archive and Heritage Collection in Devizes, Wiltshire. So Caroline would you like to start telling me a bit, a little bit about yourself?**

[Caroline Naylor]: What my RVS self you mean, sort of...

**[JH]: Yes, and your personal sort of life outside?**

[CN]: Okay.

**[JH]: And introduce who you are?**

[CN]: Okay. Well, I come from Yorkshire and I was married and had three sons and decided that I really wanted to do something one day a week. Scoured the local papers and saw an advertisement for, mm, someone who was interested in hospitals and could drive and was willing to, to work one day a week, it didn't mention charity or WRVS or anything. So I rang up and I spoke to somebody and it wasn't until she sort of had explained it and so on she said 'Oh we, we are the WRVS', and I said 'Who's that'? [Laughter] And that was how it all started with them. And the year before I'd become a magistrate so I've now been a magistrate for twenty-five years, I'm still doing that. So with sitting in court on a Thursday this job for The WRVS was on a Monday so I thought that would work really well and fit in with, with the family. And I got paid for it so I got an honorarium of eight pounds a week. So that's how it all started.

**[JH]: And, mm, so you've told me about your reasons for....**

[CN]: Mm.

**[JH]: I mean you were looking for something to do. Mm, did you know anything about the organisation before you started?**

[CN]: I didn't even know it existed, which seems amazing but I'd never, I'd never really, I'd never heard of it at all. But I went down for the interview and the lady who interviewed me was called Elizabeth Cowley and it was at the area office in Leeds and they just wanted somebody to go in, as I say, one day a week and do a bit of paperwork. All of the hospitals had to send in returns, I'm not sure I can't remember whether they were weekly returns or monthly returns but they used to be piled up in, in my little In-box and I would answer in about triplicate or quadruplicate on this old-fashioned typewriter. And a copy would get sent to head office and a copy would go somewhere else and we'd keep a copy and a copy would go back to them, oh it was, there were copies all over the place. And I would do that on one of the Mondays and then the following Monday I would go out to visit one of the hospitals around in, in our sort of area. So it was an area sort of appointment as opposed to a more local sort of project so if you like I sort of went in at the, the middle level.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And that was, as I say, how it, how it all sort of started.

**[JH]: And can you describe sort of your first day as a hospital organiser?**

[CN]: Well, I can't honestly remember but the first day, apart from the fact that it was like all WRVS offices it was pretty old and dilapidated. Because it was an area office we had one side of, of in a

room and then at the, the other side was the actual Leeds office which ran the local sort of Leeds projects as well. And I had a little desk at, at one side with, as I say, a very old typewriter, a very old desk. And we used to take our own sandwiches in and I think we worked from about ten till, till three. And there was a secretary called Audrey and then there was Elizabeth Cowley who had interviewed me and myself, and that was the, the three of us who, who were there.

**[JH]: And do you have any other memories of when you first became an organiser?**

[CN]: Mm, well, of doing that role. I mean it was, it was very interesting, I enjoyed it because I used to go round all the different hospitals in the Yorkshire area and of course, we had quite a lot. And it was the tea bars that were in the hospitals that I was visiting. Because we were just getting to the stage of being more conscious about health and safety and food hygiene. And one of my jobs which made me not very popular was to stop people from bringing their own food in to make the sandwiches. And in one of the hospitals we had a wonderful elderly lady called Gladys, I can't remember her surname, but Gladys would bring in, she was the project manager, she would bring in two dozen hard boiled eggs every morning that she'd boiled at home the night before to make the sandwiches with to sell to people. I mean no training on hygiene or anything like that.

[00:05:00]

And it hadn't mattered, you know, it did, it's not that they were doing anything illegal that's just how the projects ran, we used to make sandwiches. And then I had to tell them that really they shouldn't be using wooden chopping boards, which didn't go down very well, so all the wooden chopping boards had to go and they had to get like these white plastic ones. And then a bit, a bit later on they weren't allowed to do any washing up themselves either, we had to have dishwashers because they weren't allowed tea towels. Someone else used to take the tea towels home and wash those every night and bring them back the next day. I mean it was a real voluntary sort of job, you know.

**[JH]: Mm.**

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[CN]: And everybody loved it, all the volunteers were very happy. And this was not just in one hospital I mean this was all, all the hospital projects and all the local tea bars. So I had to sort of check up on that sort of thing. And also on signage because people would just write on a piece of cardboard, you know, 'Tea 1/6' or whatever. Well, we had gone decimal actually by then so it was probably tea, 'Tea 30p' or, and 'Coffee '40p' and it would be stuck up with a piece of Blu Tack on the, on the side of the, of the shop. And as WRVS was progressing and becoming that little bit more professional they didn't want those sort of signs they wanted proper printed signs and so on, so, so again I was the person who sort of had to go in and say to them 'Well you'll have to take that notice down, you know, it has to be laminated', or we can, we started then getting from head office proper printed signs and notices and, and that would be my job to sort of take them round to the hospitals and make sure that they were up. So if I was going I think there was sort of a bit of a dread, you know, amongst, amongst them, 'Oh Lord this woman's coming again we're probably going to hide the tea towels' and this sort of thing. [Laughter] But that was really how WRVS operated within the hospitals anyway, and of course, we did give a lot of money to the hospitals with our, with our grants. And that's what the volunteers were there for, that's what they really enjoyed the fact that the money that was raised was going back to the hospital. It was before the days of paying rent to the hospitals, we would gift things, and I'm sure in the archive there's loads of photographs of us giving gifts of things to the hospitals, and that's what WRVS was all about in those days. [Pause]

**[JH]: And so between sort of when you started in 1990 and sort of then 1994 when you became a volunteer trainer how did your role as a hospital organiser change?**

[CN]: Well, the, the role of the hospital organiser they decided quite rightly that I couldn't possibly do it as a volunteer for sort of four or five hours once a week, that it was getting a bit more serious now, they were want, they were wanting to pay somebody to have a full-time job to do that so that job sort of disappeared, but at the same time whoever was sort of in charge, I can't, I can't think of who, who it might have been but, but someone from head office decided that we really ought to be doing some training of these volunteers because there were the new sort of hygiene rules coming in and so on. And I sort of said 'Oh well, I, I would, don't mind, you know, I've never had any training experience but', I said 'I wouldn't mind sort of starting doing a little bit of training in, in our area'.

And they appointed training managers so the one who was appointed for the north east was called Brian King and I sort of became his assistant, so my role as area hospital organiser finished but my role as a volunteer trainer just helping, helping out Brian started. And it was around that time that because I'd worked in an, in an area office people coming in from like the divisions, sort of the whole of the, of the division I'd, I'd met them so they'd sort of got to know me because they were coming to the area office. And that was when it was first mentioned that would I like to become a company member and I said, you know, 'What's a company member'? [Laughter] And it, I think it, the role of a company member was really someone who didn't actually do anything particular but was like the eyes and the ears and the representative of volunteers. So there were, I think there were five or six of us in Yorkshire as company members.

[00:10:00]

And we could go to any meetings that we wanted to with the paid staff, and it was handy because they met at the area office in Leeds and of course, I was based there. And so I would sit in on the meetings with the, the hospital organiser and the Emergency Services organiser and the, you know, the county organiser and all the, when they had their meetings and I would just sit there and so I would know what was going on within the organisation.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And I could sort of, I was usually given a little slot to, in case there was anything that I wanted to say about how volunteers felt about certain things so, so I could sort of, say if they were going to introduce something 'Well, I'm not sure how, you know, as a volunteer I don't quite know how that would go down'. So it was the beginning really of starting to get some feedback if you like from volunteers now that certain people were beginning to be paid. Because of course originally, as you well know, I mean nobody was paid were they?

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And then there was this feeling...

[JH]: **Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Quite strong.

[JH]: **Mm.**

[CN]: About the volunteers who didn't see why they should be volunteering for nothing when so and so who was an area manager was being paid. I mean they weren't paid a lot but it was just this sort of beginning...

[JH]: **Yes.**

[CN]: Of The WRVS moving from a purely voluntary organisation to an organisation where certain people had to be paid in order to get the right sort of calibre of person, and that's when it all, if you like, became a bit more serious I suppose in that then you started with your training.

[JH]: **Mm.**

[CN]: And being ans..., more answerable sort of to people. And then we had a, we had all this fun about bank accounts and things where I think we had over three thousand bank accounts, I mean Matthew will probably know, but that everyone would pay the money in from their projects but nobody actually knew how many projects were out there.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And it was, I know Jerry Burton was just amazed by the fact that we'd, you know, we'd got all these projects and everyone was working wonderfully well in its own little way but there wasn't anyone who actually knew how many projects were out there.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And so that was a huge piece of work but that, I mean I'm sort of jumping the gun a little bit there because that happened over a long period of time.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Sorting out all that.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: But we had, we had people from the projects who would walk to the bank with all the week's takings in their handbag and just walked to pay it in. Well nobody thought any more about it.

**[JH]: No.**



[CN]: But, and the more things you sort of talked about and learnt about the more horrified [Laughter] certain people were and thought 'Well, we're going to have to try and change all this'. So the role of the company member, if you like, was, was to act as the sort of liaison. And we had one meeting a year.

**[JH]: Right.**

[CN]: Where we, we went to the AGM which was held in London and all the company members would go, and I don't know there were probably about thirty of us over the whole country, as I say there were about five in Yorkshire, and we could go to the AGM but we couldn't actually say anything or do anything.

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: Or vote about anything at all. And I can remember us all sort of having a get together and a chat and we sort of said 'Well, that, this doesn't seem right, it doesn't seem right. What, well, you know if we don't have a say or a vote what's the point of having company members'? And so that was when they started taking a bit more sort of notice of company members and it was the era then where we'd got Tina Tietjen...

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Who, who'd started and Jerry, and I, and so I, it was decided then that perhaps we ought to make the company members into more, mm, make it a more sort of what's the word I'm looking for? Recognised sort of thing or make it more of a proper part of WRVS. And it was about that time that Alice became Vice-Chairman and so it was decided that we would form a little group of maybe two or three company members...

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: From around the whole country, and Alice who was Vice-Chairman and Tina, and we would get a group of some and I can't remember who they were, I don't know whether Alice can remember, but we would form a proper group.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And we would all be volunteers. Because a company member could be somebody who had had some small honorarium in the past.

[00:15:00]

But if we were going to make this group of people to represent the volunteers in WRVS then obviously they, nobody was supposed to be paid.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: So that's when the Vice-Chairman's Committee was formed. So it took, I suppose it took at least a year to transfer sort of from company members to Vice-Chairman committee members. But we, as I say, we had some very interesting meetings and, and thrashed out sort of what we were going to do and so on. I was one of the working party on, on that group, mm, and so that's how the vice-chairman's committee was formed. And, as I say, Alice was our Chairman obviously and we had probably about twenty, twenty-five members but throughout the whole country. And we would, by then we'd started with E-mails and things like that, computers so we could keep in touch that way,

which was good, and we had probably two or maybe three meetings every year where we would get together, and we'd also got Milton Hill by then.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Which was, was really good. Mm, so, so I was, I was part of the Vice-Chairman's Committee and they were all volunteers.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Though there might be a project manager from, you know, a hospital shop or an Emergency Services person and, and I was still doing my volunteer training.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: So I was actually doing the, the two hours, that was what my volunteering was within WRVS then.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Was going round doing the training. So I actually moved a lot between projects which was quite good.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Still and travelled around quite a lot. And, as I say, by then we were doing little training courses. I mean when I look back on them now I suppose they were very, mm, sort of unprofessional sort of things but it was better than nothing and we put all the volunteers who worked in hospital shops through health and safety sort of things and food safety courses. And then because a lot of the volunteers weren't very happy with all the changes that were going on, and there were huge changes going on in the '90s, mm, we, we did a little training course on managing change and various things. So that kept me really busy. I, I went on a Train the Trainers course so that I knew what I was doing and that's when I met Val and all the other training managers, because by then they'd set up a training department which WRVS never had and Mark Lever was in charge of training, so when I first met Mark he was the training manager. And Val lived in Manchester so she was doing the north west of the country as a training manager and Brian King was doing the north east and I was his assistant sort of.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: So, so I then got involved in the training side, and although I was a volunteer and not being paid, I went to the all the training meetings then down at Milton Hill because I was obviously involved with, with the training. And Mark decided that we should all do a NVQ. So, mm, we started, we embarked on this NVQ so we had quite a lot of fun doing that. [Laughter] But we did manage, most of us did managed too to get through, this took about two years or so but I did get an NVQ in, in Training. Mm, and so that was, so I was then doing the, the volunteering, you know, the Vice-Chairman's Committee and also the training side. So that's, you know, that was that up to now. I don't know if you...

**[JH]: So quite a few different roles there?**

[CN]: Oh well, I had, yes, I had, but I mean I loved it. It was, it kept me, so it was a full-time job.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: For which I wasn't being paid a penny. [Laughter] And then it was decided that because Brian was only wanting to work two or three days a week because he was getting near retirement age, mm, they, they asked me if I would work the other two days on a paid basis. So I said well, yes, I was doing it anyway for nothing but if they were going to pay me a small amount then, and I was going to be a training manager sort of along with Mark then, then that was fine. So I did that and I did get paid for I think it was about six months. And I got a mobile phone and, mm, I felt quite, you know, I got a computer at home because I was, you know, a proper training manager as opposed to just helping, just helping Brian. So, so that was my sort of very small part of actually doing something in WRVS that I was paid for. [Laughter]

[00:20:00]

Which was quite a contrast to, to everything else.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: But then my time on the Vice-Chairman's Committee was coming to an end, because we'd decided when we were setting it up that you could only do six years, that you could do three years and then another three if you were voted to, to stay on. But they needed another trustee so I sent my CV in sort of as, as a volunteer because someone from the volunteer side of the organisation, because obviously they, that was what, what they needed at the time because you had to have people who knew what they were doing.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: You know, finance people or marketing people and this sort of thing, but also it was felt that it was important to have volunteers on the trustee board as well.

[JH]: Yes.

[CN]: So, so that was, I then became a trustee.

[JH]: Mm, mm.

[CN]: So I had to stop being paid.

[JH]: Yes.

[CN]: So it was very short and sweet.

[JH]: Mm.

[CN]: My paid employment with WRVS and I said 'Well, I'd still like to keep on doing the training'.

[JH]: Yes.

[CN]: Because that was what I enjoyed doing, mm and so that was what, as I say, what I did.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: The training and then a board member. So, mm, I then sat on the board for three years I think, and that was when Alice was doing her second lot of three years as Vice-Chairman. Mm, and it was decided then that Tina said would, would Val and I be prepared to take over from Alice? So for my last three years on the board I was Vice-Chairman along, along with Alice. So it, you know, it sort of all followed a course along.

**[JH]: Mm, mm. And, mm, so looking at when you were a company member and Jerry Burton was Chief Executive at the time...**

[CN]: Mm, mm.

**[JH]: What were your opinions on him being, a Chief Executive being introduced to the organisation?**

[CN]: Mm, I didn't really have an awful lot of involvement with that then.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Because, as I say, as company members we, we could see things, hear things and so on but we, we were fairly powerless to, mm, to sort of do anything. And, mm, yes, I didn't have any particular strong feelings about it at all. But I know that there, the, the fact that he was a man to start with a lot of people found quite hard. But because we'd got, still got a female Chairman then I think he was sort of accepted, mm, fairly gradually probably by a lot of people, but I think it was, my own sort of views I think were that as long as he was right for the organisation it didn't really matter whether he

was male or female, but it had up to then been a very female organisation and although we had the odd, and when I say odd man you know what I mean don't you? [Laughter]

**[JH]: Yes, yes.**

[CN]: I don't mean odd as in odd.

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: But odd as in few and far between.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: There were men in the organisation but they had to be a certain sort of man who didn't feel, mm, really outnumbered, you know, by, by the fact that it was still known as a woman's organisation really, and we did have quite a lot of talk at boardroom level about whether we should drop the 'W'.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Because, mm, were we stopping men from applying to be volunteers because it was seen purely as a woman's organisation? So perhaps the fact that Jerry was one of the first men to come on board, mm, perhaps it was a good thing. I mean there were similar feelings about Mark Lever too.

**[JH]: Mm.**



[CN]: I mean as training manager that was one thing but then when it was sort of seen that he was going to be a Chief Exec after that, I suppose people had got more used to Jerry but they thought 'Oh now what's going to be next', you know, 'are we going to have a male Chairman'? And of course, we have now haven't we?

**[JH]: Mm, yes.**

[CN]: With Richard. I've never met him but, mm, I'm sure he's doing a good job.

**[JH]: He's very nice.**

[CN]: Mm.

**[JH]: I've met him.**

[CN]: I mean it's the right, it's getting the, the actual right person isn't it?

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: And I think we've finally got away probably in this organisation now from thinking that it is just a women's organisation. I'd like to think so anyway.

**[JH]: And with the decisions Jerry made in sort of the '90s about it, when he had to turn it really in to a charity instead of a Crown service how did you feel about those changes that he made?**

[CN]: I think they had to be. As I've touched on earlier that the fact that, you know, all the...

[00:25:00]

We were trying to do so many things, so many different things. I mean we had the clothing stores and we had shops in prisons and tea bars in psychiatric hospitals and, you know, we were spread so wide. We did blood sort of transit, we had the blood donating sort of things in Scarborough and Filey and Yorkshire, and everywhere you went there were the clothing stores and there was, there was so much that if someone said to you if you were trying to sell flags on the street for WRVS and someone said 'What do you do?' you'd have to say 'Well', you know, 'here's a check and you sit down and it will take me half an hour to tell you'. [Laughter] And if you were going to become a charity as, as we had to do...

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: In order to, to survive really we had to actually understand what we were doing better, and we had to, I don't like this expression but get our heads round what we were good at and what, what we could give up. And, and that was a huge piece of work to do really. And it was, it was a very difficult thing to do telling people who vol..., had volunteered for years in a specific project that we were actually going to close the project. But it was the same sort of thing with, with the money and the bank accounts that, but everything worked wonderfully well but there was just it, we were just too diverse really.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And we had to cut down and we had to decide on what was going to be the most important bits that we wanted to keep going. And we also had to think of a revenue, you know, what, what made us money so we had to sit down and look at the things that, that didn't pay or that actually cost us money and the things that actually made us a bit of, a bit of money. And then the hospitals at that same time started to want rent, which was a big thing, and the volunteers were not happy about that at all, I don't think anybody was particularly. They liked the fact that we could choose to give them money for a specific thing, not money to just actually be on the site, I mean that seemed to go against a lot of what WRVS was all about. But again things became so much more commercialised that it needed some good brains behind it.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Which is why you had to get people like Jerry Burton and Tina Tietjen, and you had to get people on the ground as well who actually knew what they were doing and were prepared to work full-time sort of and they had to be, had to be paid for that. So there was a huge switch from becoming purely a voluntary organisation to becoming something that was sort of viable for the 1990s. So I don't think Jerry Burton was particularly popular amongst the volunteers.

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: But I think because people didn't like change and wanted things just to stay as they were and all he did was change things. But when you knew the full picture and you knew the full story it made it a little bit easier. And we did try, he did try to have meetings with volunteers, meetings around the country, I mean we did what we called road shows.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: To go round to, to try and explain to people, but I mean a lot of the volunteers didn't bother going, they, they, they grumbled about how things were but they, they weren't prepared to come and sort of listen to find out in a lot of cases. You know, I mean some people were but it was such a huge transition at, in that time, it was quite a, I suppose a momentous time really. So that, that was that.

**[JH]: Yes. And did he, were there any other changes or decisions made about the organisation while you were a company member?**

[CN]: Mm, I don't, I don't think whilst I was a company... Well, there must have been lots of things went on while I was a company member but I wasn't a company member for all that long.

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: May be a couple, two or three years and then, as I say, we, we became the Vice-Chairman's Committee and so on. So a lot of the changes, and I would get confused in my mind if I tried to work out what changes happened while I was a company member.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And what changes happened further sort of down the line. Mm, but there, there certainly were, as I say, huge changes and, and to do with uniforms and Cenotaph parades and, and, you know, all these sorts of things that The WRVS had been so, always doing.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: You know.

**[JH]: You just mentioned Cenotaph parades, what happened with those, how did they...?**

[CN]: Mm, well, I think that it was all the fact with everybody had to have uniforms and so on and all of a sudden you were getting a culture where people didn't have uniforms any more.

[00:30:00]

Some people didn't want to buy them or, mm, and we'd, we became less of an uniformed organisation, mm, but because, as I say, the normal, average volunteer didn't have a uniform but, but you could borrow, you could borrow them.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Because you had to have a uniform to go down to the, to the Cenotaph, mm, and to do the, do the parades. And then we got somebody on the, I think it was Sadie who used to do the, mm, the poppies, who organised all the wreaths for everybody. Mm, so that was something obviously that, you know, I think we still do don't we? That's quite a big part of the organisation. [Pause]

**[JH]: And so when you were up, you went from being company member to being on the Vice-Chairman's Committee?**

[CN]: Ah, ha.

**[JH]: Mm, and you've told me how that was set up with Alice.**

[CN]: Mm, mm.

**[JH]: And the other people who were on there. Mm, how influential was the Vice-Chairman's Committee in the organisation?**

[CN]: [Pause] I think it, I think it made quite a difference because for the first time ever people were having to listen to, to the voice of the volunteer if you like, and we were able to, to make our voice known, mm, through the trustees who were, mm, sort of representing the volunteers, and also because of course, Alice was on the board and she was also the Chairman of the, of the Vice-Chairman's Committee if you like. And we were, we were able to get a lot more information about how the organisation ran, whereas as company members we, I mean we could go to meetings and so on but we never saw particular papers about things. But as the Vice-Chairman's Committee one of the things that we asked if, if it were possible to do would be to see a lot of the board papers.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: The trustee's papers and so on that had been discussed at, so that we actually knew what was going on before it became public knowledge so that we could influence in some small way perhaps how to broach certain things with, with the volunteers who we were in touch with. And, and also there was a, because it was a sort of regularised, if that's the right word, committee and we had representatives throughout the country who went to all their local things and so on we could get feedback from, from all over that, that actually meant something.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And that we would feed back to Alice and that she could then, mm, take on to, on to the board and, as I say, me and Val later on could, could do the same thing. Mm, because there was a lot of, we, the Vice-Chairman's Committee it was decided at board level as well would present medals and things like that.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Because volunteers really preferred to get a medal from another volunteer than from Mrs so and so who's only been here half an hour, you know, and thinks she's the bee's knees and look at how much money she's getting paid sort of attitude, which is sort of what it was like with some of the older volunteers, and they didn't want their fifteen years certificate from her thank you very much. [Laughter] So we could organise nice tea parties and things like that which the volunteers enjoyed and, and do medal presentations, but we could also use that as a, as a means of giving a little chat to the volunteers as well about why things were changing.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Because generally speaking if they knew why they were a bit better about it.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And very often I would get somebody coming up, up to me and saying 'I was really cross when I came to this meeting about so and so but', she said 'now that you've told me I sort of see why we're doing it, so', you know 'so thank you'. Mm, you still got the irate volunteers, you know.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: But again it was good for them to have somebody who they could actually approach and, and say what they thought. And because we weren't paid we had no fear about losing our jobs.

**[JH]: No. [Laughter]**

[CN]: Bec..., because, you know, that nobody could sack us. So people would talk to us whereby they perhaps wouldn't talk to the paid employees. And we also got the paid emp..., paid employees talking to us about certain things they weren't happy with because they daren't mention it to their line manager but could we do anything about it or could... And very often we could because, as I say, we weren't frightened to speak up.

[00:35:00]

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: And we had access to people who they didn't have access to. So it actually worked very well I think as a sort of circular method of, of, mm, getting information around the organisation. [Pause] How are we doing?

**[JH]: Very well.**

[CN]: [Laughter]



**[JH]: So then after being on the Vice-Chairman's Committee...?**

[CN]: Mm, mm.

**[JH]: You became a Vice-Chairman. Did the, did the committee still exist while you were the Vice-Chairman?**

[CN]: Yes, yes, the committee existed until after I'd left. It disbanded whilst Val was, mm, Vice-Chairman and the reasons behind that I'm, I'm not sure. I think maybe it just outgrew itself and things changed again. But no, whilst Val and I were, were Vice-Chairmen, mm, we were still in charge of the Vice-Chairman's Committee and we were both trainers, Val and I. She'd kept up her training, mm, and I was still doing a little bit of training too. So we were able to train our committee if you like.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And we, we started with things like appraisals because they had started within the organisation of paid people being appraised and Val and I sort of said 'Well, we should sort of do little sort of appraisals for the, for the Vice-Chairman's Committee and make, make people realise that we're, you know, committed to, mm, to doing that sort of thing'. So yes, the Vice-Chairman's Committee was pretty strong, mm, when, when, when Val and I were Vice-Chairmen. And for the AGM, which of course, we held at Milton Hill when we had that wonderful facility, mm, that all the Vice-Chairman's Committee members were invited to come.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: So they met with all the board and we always had a very jolly evening together and so on. And it was good for them as well to come to head office if you like, mm, and we used to have our training sessions and our Vice-Chairman meetings, which we had every sort of, well twice a year anyway, sometimes three times a year, and we had those meetings at Milton Hill as well.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: So it was such a lovely place, we were so lucky to have that.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: At that, at that time, mm, because of course, as I say Mark he, he went over to be Chief Exec so he left the training department and we got somebody called Alan Daniels who ran the training department but it still went on in a, in a similar sort of vein.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Mm, so yes, we were, we were quite a strong organisation, you know, the, the Vice-Chairman's Committee.

**[JH]: Mm. And, mm, who was the Chairman during your time as a Vice-Chairman?**

[CN]: Tina.

**[JH]: Tina?**

[CN]: Tina was. And then she left I think before, I think I had a year left as, as Vice-Chairman, mm, and, mm, and Ruth Markland took over then. So I, so I got to know Ruth quite well as well. Mm, she was very different to Tina.

**[JH]: Mm, mm. How were they different - Tina and Ruth?**

[CN]: Mm, Tina was a very get up and go, very positive.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Very let's do it sort of really, mm, up front sort of in your face sort of woman. Mm, and Ruth was a much, much calmer, much quieter sort of very, a very different sort of personality. Mm, I think, I think quite a lot of people were quite scared of Tina.

**[JH]: [Laughter]**

[CN]: She was that sort of a person. But I quite admired her because she didn't stand any nonsense and she ran the board meetings very efficiently and people knew that if they were giving a presentation to the board, you know, and they'd been given twenty minutes by Jove that's what they got - twenty minutes - you know. She was very, mm, punctual about everything and, but she had fun as well. You know we had, we had some fun as well because of course, the board were all unpaid people and they were giving up, some of the people were, you know, quite high powered in the time that I was there. You know, there was Ian Peacock and Dino Adriano and, mm, and they gave up their time to come so, you know, they wanted to enjoy it and feel that they were doing something, something useful. And again that was why it was so nice to have Milton Hill because it was so nice to be able to socialise there in, in the evening. And when you're, when you're working as

a board and you only meet up sort of three or four times a year you need to get a bit of a rapport going not around the boardroom table, mm, so that was, that worked quite well. Except it worked against me in one, in one part because, mm, they, they got me one evening, Tina and Ian Peacock and I, I ended up admitting, agreeing to go on the Finance Committee.

[00:40:00]

[Laughter] And I said 'But I don't know anything about finance', and Ian, who was an accountant, you know, he said 'You don't need to know anything about finance', he said 'we want someone who will ask stupid questions'.

**[JH]: Yes. [Laughter]**

[CN]: 'Oh well', I said 'I'm your girl then'.

**[JH]: [Laughter]**

[CN]: [Laughter] And such that was, that was how it was. Mm, it was, it, you know, it did work quite well.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Because I didn't really understand figures that well they had to sort of explain things to me and, and, you know, once or twice I would say 'Well, why? You know, 'I don't under..., I'm sorry I don't under..., why is this doesn't or something', and it would make them look at things maybe a bit more carefully. So, mm, and there was always someone there to ask if I really didn't understand

things. [Laughter] So, so yes Ruth and Tina were very, very different but both good for the organisation I think, and they were both very, very dedicated. Mm, as I say, Ruth was still going strong when I left. So, mm, that, it was when I went back to see her when she actually retired, she had a little lunch party in London and I went to that to say goodbye to her. So now I really feel that, you know, I don't know what's going on in the organisation particularly but things move on and people move on and, you know, I'm sure it's in very good hands and I get lots of gossip from Alice, [Laughter] like we all do.

**[JH]: I can imagine.**

[CN]: Yes.

**[JH]: Mm, so also was, you were saying, you were talking about Mark Lever, was he the Chief Executive while you were Vice-Chairman?**

[CN]: Yes, yes.

**[JH]: And how was he different from Jerry?**

[CN]: He was different from Jerry because he'd come up through the organisation where Jerry had come in to the organisation as Chief Exec as far as I'm aware.

**[JH]: Okay.**

[CN]: But Mark had done quite a bit of volunteering I think with WRVS and he'd been employed as a training manager so he'd, he'd travelled around a lot as a training manager, mm, and he'd got to

know the organisation better than Jerry I think. And so I think he was able to bring a different understanding probably to WRVS. Mm, he, he had been what's the word? Not coached, but he'd, Jerry and he had always got on quite well and I think Jerry was quite fond of Mark and I think he hoped that perhaps Mark would be able to take over from him. But of course, I mean we had, we interviewed for, not that I was on the board, I think Val was I'm not sure, but, you know, several people were interviewed and there was a lot of talk about whether it would be better to get somebody who'd come in with fresh eyes who knew nothing about WRVS to, to be Chief Exec or whether it would be better to have somebody who understood what we'd gone through and the, the pain, I suppose if you like, of changing the organisation so much through the '90s, mm, and all the things that, you know, that we had to do, mm, and to try and make some sort of income. Mark seemed to, and here he seemed to understand volunteers better and he had a bit of an empathy with them, and I think the volunteers could sort of understand Mark better. So I think that's really what he brought to the, to the role, mm, the fact that he was more at one with the volunteers. Mm, so they were, so in that respect they were, they were different.

**[JH]: And did Mark make any changes to the organisation while he was the Chief Executive?**

[CN]: I think he and Tina obviously between them, but, but it seemed to be changing all the time did the organisation. Who, who instigated a lot of the changes I'm, I'm honestly not, not sure, mm, but things obviously were, were changing all the time. I can remember saying to Tina 'I'll be glad when all this change is finished', and she looked at me and she said 'When that happens', she said 'WRVS may as well pack up because, you know, an organisation always, is always having to go through change'. But they were huge changes with, with everything that had to go on. So I think Mark continued what Jerry had started really, mm, the cutting down on the projects, the making things more accountable, mm, trying to sort of get an overall picture of the whole organisation and, and sort of moving it forward. And there was talk at one time of, mm, of merging maybe with one of the other charities like I think it's, is it Age UK now?

[00:45:00]

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Or something like that. So...

**[JH]: It used to be Age Concern.**

[CN]: That's right.

**[JH]: And...**

[CN]: And what was the other one? [Pause] I can't think.

**[JH]: Okay.**

[CN]: It's on the tip of my tongue. But anyway there, there were quite serious talks and I think that was more when Mark and Tina were involved. But I think we were concerned that it perhaps wouldn't be so much of a merger as more of a take-over and I don't think we felt that we were ready for that, that we wanted that, that we, we felt that we could carry on, mm, ourselves. But we still had the problem, and I think we probably still have, I don't know but, the problem of what, what we do. You know, when you go out on the street if someone is raising money for Guide Dogs For The Blind or, you know exactly what that's for.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Or Oxfam, you know about Oxfam, and the other bigger charities, Marie Curie and so on, you instantly know what, you don't have to explain do you?

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: But WRVS, or now of course, RVS, I still think it's difficult to, for people to understand quite what, what we do. I think you still have to explain what we do so people aren't going to recognise the charity as much as perhaps some of, some of the other ones. I'm not saying that that's not a reason for giving up or anything but it makes it harder to raise money.

**[JH]: And were Mark and Tina and yourself involved with any of the changes in 2004, the re-branding of the organisation?**

[CN]: Yes, yes, we were, we were all involved. I was still involved with that where, where we changed to the purple and the orange, and that went down like a bombshell with some of the volunteers you can imagine, but we felt it was time to have a complete change and a change of direction and a change of plan, mm, and I think it, I think it was the right thing to do. Mm, I always remember was that we were at one do where the, it was probably the St James Palace one shortly after we'd re-branded and the Duke of Edinburgh was going down the line and he stopped at a volunteer one or two away from me anyway and he peered at her badge and he said 'Mm, just looks like a load of balls to me'. [Laughter] I mean you know he comes out with classics.

**[JH]: He does.**

[CN]: Classic comments. Well of course, she burst out laughing and that was, mm, that was quite amusing. A lot of the people who had had the old badges were not terribly keen on, on the new, the new ones, but then the badge that we'd had before a lot of people hadn't liked that. As I say, as I've said, people don't like change particularly, mm, but it was felt that we needed something that was



more modern and we needed a better strapline and, mm, so yes, we had, we had a re-branding company obviously to help us with that. Which again the volunteers said 'How much is that costing'? you know, but volunteers would always say that I suppose wouldn't they?

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: So yes, so that was sort of exciting times again. But then you would still go round the hospitals and, and some of the other projects and they'd still have the old branding up and it took, it took a long time to, to try and get it changed over. Mm, but, you know, and they were going it, the company doing it going around all the different places there. Because I, I remember, I remember saying at one of the board meetings 'It's very hard for a volunteer to feel they've been re-branded when they go in to their project and they've still got all the old signage up', but it just wasn't possible to do everything all at, all at the same time. So they did the key projects and the bigger projects first and then sort of filtered it down so it did take quite a long time. So I don't know how they're managing now with chopping the 'W' off everywhere but, but yes, that was, that was one re-branding that I did live through, yes.

**[JH]: And, mm, you were working with Val Everitt?**

[CN]: Mm, mm.

**[JH]: At the time. How did you manage the role together, sharing the Vice-Chairman role?**

[CN]: It worked really, really well. Mm, Val and I are complete opposites but we got on like a house on fire, so we still do, we still keep in touch. And she moved, she was in Manchester and I was in Yorkshire but then she moved down to Bournemouth. So there was almost a natural division if you like, mm, which we agreed on. Tina did say to us 'You know I think it's too big a role for one person,

can you work out how you, you want to manage it'? So, so we sat down and we thought well, really an invisible line across the country is, is by far the best way.

[00:50:00]

So it was agreed that sort of Nottinghamshire sort of area, or Leicestershire, that sort of area, I would come down to that, so I would do everything above the line, Scotland as well.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And Val would do everything below the line, mm, and the Channel Islands, because we were still involved with those. But we agreed that if ever, you know, we, we needed each other to, to do different things in different parts....

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Then we would be interchangeable if you like. Mm, and we were both given a car so that we could, because we were doing such a lot of driving around. I don't know how Alice ever managed it on her own actually because, as I say, it was a, it was a full-time, we both worked full-time. Mm, but I say, when I say worked I mean we weren't paid but... And then of course, we did have E-mails, we were in constant touch with each other. We never made any sort of decisions, big decisions without seeing each other. We had regular meetings, mm, sort of halfway, we would, we would drive and meet each other and chat about everything. And, you know, Val had her little group of Vice-Chairman Committee members to look after and I had my group as well. And, and we also had the volunteering manager of WRVS, who was in charge of all the volunteers, I'm damned if I can remember her name now, it's really annoying I can picture her. But anyway I won't waste time trying to think of her name. But because we were representing the volunteers we had to work quite closely with her, so we would either come down to Milton Hill every two or three months and have a

meeting with her so that we knew whatever she was planning to do for the volunteers or with the volunteers throughout the whole country so that Val and I had an input in it. So again we were, we were very close to sort of the top paid, mm, people in, in or paid person in, in WRVS. And the three of us worked quite well together and made sure that we sort of gave a consistent message out across all the organisation.

**[JH]: And do you have any memorable moments of your time as a Vice-Chairman that you particularly remember?**

[CN]: Mm, [Pause] any particular moments? Well, mm, well, before I, before I became Vice-Chairman one of my memorable moments for WRVS was being asked when I was just a volunteer, [Laughter] so quite early on in my WRVS career, was to go to the Queen's Diamond Wedding which Tony Blair had organised, and there were three representatives from WRVS who had to be volunteers to go to this big lunch in Whitehall. And so that was a very memorable day for me, that was, that was a super day. Mm, and I suppose another very memorable day when I was Vice-Chairman was taking a group of my volunteers, mm, picked from, mm, all over the country actually so they weren't, weren't particularly my volunteers but to go to the Buckingham Palace garden party, mm, and the volunteers were so thrilled to go and we had such a lovely day. So that will always stand out as a, as a special time. Mm, and, and at other times it's, it's more the sort of the fun and the friendship.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: And the, the camaraderie that, of everybody sort of working together and pulling together that, that will always stick in my mind. Though there were downsides I suppose, like I've been stuck in awful traffic jams.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Going to, mm, trying to get on the, the M1 down to Oxford or something like that. [Laughter]  
But, but nothing that particularly else that, that stands out. [Pause]

**[JH]: And so in 2008 was that when you finished being a Vice-Chairman?**

[CN]: Yes.

**[JH]: And you decided to retire from the organisation yourself?**

[CN]: Yes. I was, I was very in two minds about it because I could have done another three years. I'd actually done six years on the board, mm, but because my Vice-Chairman's role had come after three years it was all, it was as though I could, I could go on and do the six years as Vice-Chairman, so I could have done the nine, nine years. But my husband had retired the previous year and we'd also bought a house down in Norfolk, mm, and I was just working so hard for The WRVS and I, I, if I'd been on my own I wouldn't have retired I would have done another three years, but because of, as I say, the, mm, that home sort of situation and so on...

[00:55:00]

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Not that my husband ever said, you know, 'I'd like you to give up' or anything but I felt it wasn't fair because I was away so much. And when he was working it was alright because he was busy all day but I thought 'No, it's maybe not, not on', and then I felt the time was right.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Mm, and so yes, I retired three years before I need have done. Mm, but Val carried on and, mm, it was during that following three years I think when the Vice-Chairman Committee was disbanded. Mm, we started to find it more difficult, just in my sort of last year or maybe even two years, of getting enough volunteers who were prepared to, to do it actually.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: Mm, because it was quite a commitment.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Mm, because they were expected to go round different, you know, different projects and this sort of thing. It was, as well as doing their own bit of volunteering and so we were finding that there were sort of big-ish gaps in the country where we didn't actually have a Vice-Chairman Committee member.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: And once you get to a certain percentage of people, of gaps rather...

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Because then you sort of start thinking 'Well, if nobody's going to apply, if people don't want to do it, is there a lot of point carrying on'? And so Val and I did have sort of one or two conversations about that before I retired. And then I think because Val was managing then on her own...

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: It was decided that, that perhaps the, mm, the committee ought to disband. So I mean I think it served a useful purpose at the time within the organisation, mm, but I think perhaps the time was right when it, when it stopped.

**[JH]: Yes. So it came to a natural, sort of natural end rather than being scrapped?**

[CN]: I think it, I think it did, yes, I think it did. And I think the people who were left on, on it, mm, understood. I don't think they, they sort of felt, mm, [Laughter] you know, it's, it's not right to stop it, I think they sort of agreed that, mm, perhaps the time was, was right. So that's how it all finished.  
[Pause]

**[JH]: And so from starting in 1990 to sort of finishing in 2008 did your opinions of the organisation itself change from not really knowing anything to really, really just...?**

[CN]: [Laughter] Just a bit. Mm, [Laughter] by the time I'd finished I felt if you cut me in half I'd have WRVS right through my middle. [Laughter] So, oh yes, it, it was the sort of organisation that gets to you I think. I mean you're may be beginning to find this with the archive I don't know, but because I lived it for so long and was so involved and saw so many people come and go through all the changes and all the reorganisations and so on that we had.

**[JH]: Mm, yes.**

[CN]: Saw the divisions break up and everything, you know, get changed around. But, mm, yes, it is a strange feeling, and whether it's because you're a volunteer but I don't, I don't know that it can be because people who were paid have said the same thing because like Val was paid when she was a trainer.

**[JH]: Mm, yes.**

[CN]: Mm, but she still loved the organisation and she still volunteered.

**[JH]: Right.**

[CN]: Not, not in the training, you know, she did a meals-on-wheel round, and you found so many people did other things, mm, for the organisation and you wouldn't do that if you didn't feel anything for it.

**[JH]: No, no.**

[CN]: And I, yes, I felt a real part of it and I understood it and it, I felt, I always felt it was sad in a way that it was such, so difficult to explain to someone who didn't know anything about it what, what it was. Because even my friends would sort of say 'Well, what do you do'? You know, 'What does The WRVS do'? And it wasn't really known what a huge part they played.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Right from 1938 really, you know, it, and I always thought it was a shame that we couldn't somehow get the message across better, but it wasn't for want of trying. [Laughter]

**[JH]: No. And do you still, do you know what's going on with the organisation today?**

[CN]: No, not really. Mm, because I've never been involved at a local level.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: And because an awful lot of local projects closed down where I am in, in Yorkshire. Mm, and, and I'd never got involved in something like the Harrogate Hospital shop or something like that. Mm, I, I felt that, I kept up being an Emergency Services volunteer but I was never called out. Mm, I went and did some training, mm, once or twice for them but, mm, it's, it was harder to try and stay involved.

[01:00:00]

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Mm, and because we had the house in Norfolk we, we travelled there quite a lot, and it's hard to, to give you something a weekly commitment for volunteering.

**[JH]: Yes.**



[CN]: I find it difficult enough fitting in my court sittings, mm, so I never sort of volun..., volunteered for some weekly sorts, sort of thing. Mm, and the people who I knew and have kept in touch with sort of were no longer involved with, with WRVS so I really sort of lost touch with everybody apart from Alice and, and Val, who, as I say, I'm still very friendly with and I hear a bit of what's going on from, from both of them. Mm, but Val isn't as involved now as, as she used to be but of course, with Alice having the archive here...

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: ...and she's sort of kept in touch with more people, mm, so I still hear a little bit but I don't feel the same part of involvement.

**[JH]: No.**

[CN]: As I did before. But, as I say, time changes and you move on and, you know, there's other people who are probably very involved and, you know, and I'm involved in other things now and that's how life goes on isn't it? But I certainly thoroughly enjoyed all the years that I did have with them and really have some wonderful memories. [Pause]

**[JH]: Yes. And so last year we had the seventy-fifth anniversary in May.**

[CN]: Mm, mm.

**[JH]: Mm, were you involved with that at all?**

[CN]: No, no, I wasn't, no, no. I was invited to. Was that where the do at St Paul's was?

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: Yes, I was invited to go, which was very nice, mm, but, mm, I can't remember whether we were away or what but I didn't go to it so I wasn't involved.

**[JH]: And also we've had another, mm, another re-branding really.**

[CN]: Yes, yes.

**[JH]: But very different from the one that you had in 2004.**

[CN]: Mm.

**[JH]: So we've gone, sort of gone back a little bit but also dropped 'Women' from our name.**

[CN]: Mm.

**[JH]: Do you think that was probably, is the right decision for the organisation?**

[CN]: Well, as I say, we, we wondered about, about dropping the 'W' and decided against it. Mm, but, mm, may, I would think maybe that the shorter the, you know, the, the initials now RVS, mm, I don't really know whether it's a good thing or, or not, I haven't got any strong feelings about it. What I do like is, is the fact that you have gone back a bit.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: That was one thing about Tina, mm, she was never prepared to look back. She didn't want to know anything about the, the past, she thought that the organisation should just be looking forward. And a lot of us tried to sort of say 'But, you know, a lot of our organisation is the fact that it has this history and maybe we should use that more', but she would never have any of that, I think Ruth was probably a bit better at look, at looking backwards and perhaps trying to capitalise a bit on the past. Mm, and obviously the fact now that, you know, we're getting these newsletters and things like that sort of taking people back a bit is, is no bad thing.

**[JH]: Mm, mm.**

[CN]: Mm, and it might just be something that triggers a bit more recognition with, with people. Mm, I don't, I think people get used to anything, you know, in the end. Like Scope, I mean what was Scope, what did it used to be called? You can't remember really can you, it's just Scope now. So I'm sure the fact that we've taken the 'W' out, mm, it won't, it won't make a lot of, a lot of difference.

**[JH]: And what would you say was Royal Voluntary Service's place in society today?**

[CN]: Oh the, the, the Volunteering?

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: I would say it's going to play a huge part, mm, providing we can keep going, as I say, I have no idea now about the finances of the organisation or, you know, how we're doing. Mm, but the fact

that there are going to be so many more older people, me included probably, who could stay in their own homes and, and have the help of the RVS I'm sure it's a huge, a huge thing and, mm, I hope it, I hope it can keep going and, and play a big part. I think it's going to be as important now as, as it ever was. And that I think the fact that it's more focused on keeping people in their own homes, I think that was probably the right way to go because that's what people want. Mm, so I think the fact that we went through all the agonies beforehand and, and disbanded a lot of the things that, that other organisations could probably do just as well if not better than us was, was probably a good thing.

[01:05:00]

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: And if we can keep going and offer this help and, and work in partnership with, with other charities, which I think is what we were beginning to try to do as I was leaving, and I, I just hope it, it is successful.

**[JH]: So you would say that was also the future?**

[CN]: Mm.

**[JH]: Of Royal Voluntary Service as well is working with older people?**

[CN]: Well, I think that seems to be where we've set our sort of stall out unless it's changed recently. Mm, I think it's, it's going to be a tremendous support to older people. As I say I'm hoping I might be able to take advantage of it one day. Not yet. [Laughter]

**[JH]: And so finally sort of to conclude, what would you say was your most treasured or memorable moment of being with WRVS?**

[CN]: [Pause] Mm, you've asked me a similar question and I sort of struggled to answer it, I wish I'd thought, you know, had time to think about it. But, mm, I honestly don't know. Finding one moment in, in a space of sort of eighteen years is, is not easy.

**[JH]: Mm.**

[CN]: I remember one very funny moment, I don't know whether it would be the most memorable but I do laugh about it sometimes. It was Mark, Mark Lever and I sitting on the steps at Milton Hill outside on a lovely summer's day and he said to me, 'You know Caroline, you'd make a good trustee'. And I said to him 'Mm, I've about as much chance making a trustee as you have of being Chief Executive'. [Laughter]

**[JH]: And then you were both in those roles.**

[CN]: Yes. And then I think we went back in to finish a training course or something, but I mean it's not a treasured memory but it's a, a vivid memory that I have.

**[JH]: Yes.**

[CN]: And I often look back on it and think 'Yes, how far we both came in, in the organisation'. Mm, so that's, that's one moment that's, that I do think about.

**[JH]: And do you have any other moments that you sort of relive and think about?**

[CN]: Mm, the time, as I say, that I was given three gin and tonics and then agreed to sit on the Finance Committee. I, I mean we used to laugh about that a lot Ian, Ian Peacock and Dino, who were both on the Finance Committee and me. I'd say 'I don't know how I let myself in for this'. [Laughter] So that's a moment that I often think about. [Laughter] Mm, so I don't know. The Milton Hill times were, were really good. I think, I think that, that was, it was such a great place to be able to go and, and, you know, I have memories of, of walking round the gardens every morning before, just to get some fresh air. The grounds were beautiful and, mm, it was a lovely, a lovely place to, to be. Mm, and I think always the friends that I made in the organisation are, are, you know, really, a really treasured time was, was had.

**[JH]: Yes. Excellent, but thank you very much for talking to me today.**

[CN]: You're welcome.

**[JH]: And contributing to our Voices of Volunteering Project. Thank you.**

[CN]: You're welcome.

[End of Interview 00:68:23]