

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

### Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

**Ref. No.:** BECJM

**Collection Title:** Voices of Volunteering

**Interviewee's Surname:** Beck

**Title:** Mrs

**Interviewee's Forenames:** Joan M

**Gender:** F

**Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:**

Volunteer 1972-2012 Holmfirth West Yorkshire

Meals on Wheels Organiser

Wakefield Prison Canteen

Toy Library Organiser

**Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To):** (Track1)

**Location of Interview:** Interviewees home, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire

**Name of Interviewer:** Jennifer Hunt

**Type of Recorder:** H4nZoom

**Total no. tracks:** 1

**Mono or Stereo:** Stereo

**Recording Format:** WAV 44.1/16

**Total Duration:** 00:42:41

**Additional Material:** Biography Form and Recording Agreement

**Copyright:** Royal Voluntary Service

**Clearance:** Yes

**Interviewer's Notes:** Joan M Beck (JMB) reminisces about her time with WRVS in Holmfirth, West Yorkshire. She talks about how she first started with Meals-on-Wheels (MOW) in 1972 and then became the Local Meals-On-Wheels organiser in 1984. JMB also mentions the other work she became involved with during her time with WRVS including Wakefield Prison Canteen, Emergency Services (ES) and Holmfirth Toy Library. JMB also comments on receiving her MBE in 1999 for her WRVS work. She concludes with her thoughts on Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) today, what its future might be and her most treasured memory of her time with WRVS.

Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:09]	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Joan, please can you introduce yourself?</b> JMB explains she had to retire from nursing when she got married, moved to Holmfirth and got involved with WRVS.</p> <p><b>What did you know about WRVS before you joined as a member?</b> JMB talks about her friend asking her to help with MOW and becoming the organiser when she left, doing a lot of office work. Had never heard of WRVS before meeting her friend.</p> <p><b>Did you have any other reasons for joining WRVS?</b> 'Just my caring nature I suppose', did not want to go back to nursing.</p> <p><b>What were your earliest memories of WRVS?</b> Primarily MOW, talks about not being able to pick up meals when schools were closed and finding alternatives, started MOW at Washpit Mill in Holmfirth. JMB thinks she went to every kitchen in the area picking up meals, mentions having drivers on monthly rotas, 'everybody worked, no body minded' compared to today when they have trouble getting people.</p>
[00:05:40]	<p><b>Meals on Wheels</b></p> <p><b>What was your role in MOW?</b> JMB talks about taking over from her friend as MOW organiser, having to put together the rotas.</p> <p><b>How were the meals delivered?</b> Using Hotlocks, charcoal in the bottom, meals delivered individually, 20 meals per round. Always delivered a hot meal in trays.</p> <p><b>Can you tell me about the people you were delivering to?</b> JMB mentions that they were all usually older people, still sees some of the people she delivered to, the youngest was under 70, people got four meals a week and never complained. Then JMB remembers they complained about chips.</p> <p><b>You said before you became the organiser it was your friend, did you change anything?</b> JMB says 'no' but it got busier as she got other route going in the area.</p> <p><b>Can you tell me about the volunteers who delivered the meals?</b> Anybody who had a free couple of hours to spend, meals went out between 11am and 1pm. Talks about insisting on people sticking to their rotas.</p> <p><b>Did you work from the local office?</b> 'From my house, originally they used the office in the Methodist Church and worked</p>

[00:12:00]	<p>well for years until it became modernised, gave up the MOW before the church closed.</p> <p><b>You were organiser from 1984, did anything else change about MOW in the area?</b> Talks about Kirklees and when it stopped paying expenses and then providing MOW through WRVS. At the time JMB felt it was wrong because now meals are only delivered on Friday and not enough people to deliver.</p> <p><b>Is there anything else you would like to share about your time with MOW?</b> JMB said she enjoyed it and was a long time.</p>
[00:14:09]	<p><b>Wakefield Prison Canteen</b></p> <p><b>You also worked in Wakefield Prison with WRVS, what was your role in the prison?</b> JMB talks about going at visitor times to serve tea and biscuits, people always asked why they could not have sandwiches. Mentions only seeing visitors and prisoners kept in their rooms. JMB enjoyed going but hated the security.</p> <p><b>Why did you decide to help at the prison?</b> Talks about somebody wanting help for it, thought the prison rang and asked. A church also helped with the work.</p> <p><b>Did you have to wear uniform to go into the Prison?</b> 'No we just went as we were', just wore a WRVS piny to show what they were doing.</p> <p><b>Did you wear uniform for other occasions?</b> JMB comments that you could but she did not wear uniform except on official occasions. Talks about having a uniform store in Huddersfield.</p> <p><b>How did you feel about volunteering at the prison?</b> 'I loved doing it'</p>
[00:18:57]	<p>Mentions a few other roles she had including MOW in Meltham and ES Training.</p>
[00:21:53]	<p><b>Emergency Services and Training</b></p> <p><b>What sort of training were you doing with emergency services?</b> JMB mentions map reading, as all she can remember, making meals, making teas in great big urns, soya boilers.</p> <p><b>Did you attend any emergencies?</b> JMB talks about going to one in Wakefield covered a large area helping other emergency services, helping the police.</p> <p><b>Are there any exercises you can tell me about?</b> JMB could remember individual ones but did a very few, younger girls went on them more times than she did. Talks about availability on the call out system.</p>
[00:21:53]	<p><b>Toy Library</b></p>

[00:25:47]	<p><b>You were helping out at the Toy Library, can you tell me about your first role there?</b>  JMB was organiser from the beginning with about 11 other volunteers, Pat Andrews did a lot of the fundraising for the toys, very well supported, met someone recently who used the toy library, ran for 21 years, 'it died, it died literally, people just stopped coming'. JMB explains that she did not know why it closed.</p> <p><b>What sort of toys were you providing?</b>  JMB describes some of the toys which they had in the toy library.</p> <p><b>Was the toy library open every day or once a week?</b>  The toy library was open on Thursdays which was market day. JMB talks about having the phoenix night club, which they had to pay for, put the toys out and then take them home again in their cars. Talks some more about some of the toys they had in the Library such as tunnels.</p> <p><b>What about the building you had for the toy library, how would you describe that?</b>  JMB talks about the youth club, hiring upstairs and downstairs, being able to use the cupboards for small toys but storing bigger ones in people's basements.</p> <p><b>Who was allowed to use the toy library?</b>  People could arrive at the door and register, talks about the number of children, toys for the disabled, writing to different companies who sent money. When the library closed had to find somewhere for the money to go. Found a good home for the toys.</p> <p><b>Bill Owen used to come and visit the Toy Library as well ...</b>  He was an associate member, only came once when they were fundraising, JMB describes him as a nice man.</p> <p><b>How did you feel when the Toy Library closed?</b>  'Upset really', JMB explains how it was going for 20-21 years, mentions that there were children they had looked after so felt sorry it had to close but people were not visiting the Toy Library.</p> <p><b>Did you provide any other Children's Services?</b>  JMB says no, there weren't any other services, talks about the age of children going to school changing and affecting the numbers going to the Toy Library.</p>
[00:30:25]	<p><b>MBE</b></p> <p><b>Also you received an MBE for your work in Holmfirth and with WRVS in 1999, How did you feel when you received it?</b>  'I was delighted actually', talks about her and her husband being invited to the Garden Party but were not able to get there for health reasons so Kirklees Council gave her a lunch for 40 people. JMB selected some one from each MOW route she had overseen to attend. MBE was presented by the Lord Mayor.</p>

	<p><b>Was there a lot of secrecy around being given your MBE?</b> Nobody was told before the award was presented.</p> <p><b>Was all your community work done through WRVS?</b> JMB mentions she worked with the police teaching the children to cycle but all her other work was through WRVS.</p>
[00:34:39]	<p><b>Conclusions</b></p> <p><b>In 1992 the organisation changed to a charity, what was your experience of that?</b> JMB says she did not really notice that change and did not make any difference, talks about the money hopefully going to WRVS.</p> <p><b>You have been in the organisation since 1972 what do you think is the biggest change you have experienced?</b> JMB talks about people not getting involved anymore, talks about the people helping stay in the charity a long time.</p> <p><b>Where would you say RVS's place in society is today?</b> JMB mentions she has not had anything sent from WRVS for a long time, does not think people want to volunteer anymore. Talks about U3A in the Holmfirth area as an example of people losing interest because of cost and no real organisation.</p> <p><b>What do you think is the future for RVS?</b> If people are not volunteering then it will not carry on which would be a mistake.</p> <p><b>Is there anything else you would like to share about your time with WRVS?</b> JMB says she enjoyed the work.</p> <p><b>From all the stories and memories you have what is your favourite or most treasured?</b> JMB talks about seeing people eating their meals because they enjoyed the visits. There was more of a social element; JMB is still friends with a lot of people she volunteered with.</p>