

Voices of Volunteering: 75 Years of Citizenship and Service

Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

Ref. No.: BROG

Collection Title: Voices of Volunteering

Interviewee's Surname: Brown

Title: Mrs

Interviewee's Forenames: Gladys

Gender: F

Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:

Volunteer 1959-1972

Range of roles over the years

Meals-on-Wheels

Furniture collections and distribution

Emergency feeding

Training

Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To): 16/07/2014 (Track 1)

Location of Interview: Interviewee's home in Ipplepen, Newton Abbot, Devon

Location Interview Deposited: Royal Voluntary Service Archive & Heritage Collection, Devizes, Wiltshire

Name of Interviewer: Jennifer Anne Hunt

Type of Recorder: H4nZoom

Total no. tracks: 1

Mono or Stereo: Stereo

Recording Format: WAV

Total Duration: 00:52:19

Additional Material: Biography sheet, Recording Agreement

Copyright: Royal Voluntary Service

Clearance: Yes

Interviewer's Notes:

Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:11]	<p>Glady's would you just like to introduce yourself? GB gives her age and mentions doing lots of jobs with WRVS in the past but has now lost contact.</p> <p>What are your earliest memories of WRVS/WVS? GB explains she can't remember how she got into it, mentions the offices they had. GB talks about collecting furniture and storing it.</p> <p>Why did you decide to join WVS? 'It just seemed the right thing to do' GB talks about having time and not having to work.</p> <p>As well as picking up furniture what were your other roles? GB mentions MOW rounds, the person she was with, collecting meals. Comments that she did anything that needed doing including feeding at army events, taking a cooking course at her own expense.</p>
[00:04:36]	<p>When you were doing MOW, who were you delivering meals to? GB says mostly elderly people who couldn't cope</p> <p>Where there any other volunteers you used to work with at the office? GB mentions a paid secretary in the office used to ring her up to ask her to do jobs. Talks about how other volunteers helped but did not have staff underneath her. Comments on how the work helped fill up her life. Mentions not volunteering in the summer holidays.</p> <p>You also did the food flying squad ... GB talks about feeding at fetes, handling money for other charities. Talks about feeding at an ROA base and staying overnight. Mentions Tattoo, how they served the food, who they fed, how long it was for, how the food was cooked on an old fashioned boiler.</p> <p>And did you receive any training? GB comments on not having any WRVS training but eventually being a trainer herself. Mentions training for school meals after leaving WRVS when moving to Lee-on-Solvent. Talks about Doreen Bird getting her to teach people to be trainers.</p>
[00:15:06]	<p>When you were training was it just to promote WRVS or was it for ES as well? GB comments on ES training, consensus on wearing uniform. Talks about going up to London to represent 3 or 4 counties at the Cenotaph. Mentions Lady Reading at the event.</p> <p>And did you meet Lady Reading? 'oh yes'</p> <p>What were your impressions of her?</p>

<p>[00:18:58]</p>	<p>GB mentions having respect for her but not having contact with her. 'must have been a kind hearted person to do what she did'.</p> <p>In 1968 you were feeding German Students... GB comments she didn't know why they did it but there were about 40. Talks about where they were fed, mentions that there wasn't really any social contact. [background noise is GB looking through her personal WVS/WRVS Archives] GB points to a photograph and mentions feeding at a Cheshire Homes event and having to take equipment. Describes other feeding roles that she did, how much meals cost to produce while feeding German students and food that was bought.</p>
<p>[00:24:15]</p>	<p>You also mentioned the Cheshire Homes, did you do that every year? GB says they did it every year, didn't have time to see what other people were doing.</p> <p>When you were giving the One-in-Five training did you feel that it was useful? GB says she doesn't remember a lot about it, was in Hampshire. Talks about leaving WRVS and looks at a newspaper article of her with Lady Lucas Tooth. GB talks about not being able to imagine what it was like now and what you talked about during One-in-Five.</p>
<p>[00:30:00]</p>	<p>Did you attend any emergencies while you were on the ES team? GB says that she must have done, can remember people on camp beds. 'At the time it was just one more job to do'.</p> <p>You mentioned before that you went to the cenotaph; did you represent WVS/WRVS in any other way? GB talks more about her trip to the cenotaph and turning up with her hat on and the others wearing berets.</p> <p>GB mentions being in charge of emergencies in Bath, refugees from Poland in Bath and taking some of the furniture to them.</p>
<p>[00:35:00]</p>	<p>When you were delivering furniture where they empty houses or where people were already living? GB says it was a mixture, got recommendations from Doctors, mentions some of the furniture they delivered. Comments on the quality of the furniture and the amounts they received. Talks about having to upholster chairs.</p> <p>And did you always get good quality furniture? GB says if it was rubbish it was probably thrown away, difficulty of saying no to people who gave it.</p> <p>Were the people sent to you through Social Services? Doctors and church recommendations or people in contact with those who needed it.</p>
<p>[00:39:54]</p>	<p>As well as ES, MOW and Furniture, was there anything else you did with</p>

<p>[00:45:00]</p>	<p>WVS/WRVS? GB comments on driving people who were in need of a holiday to the coast. Talks about all her work coming from the secretary in the office. Talks more about a 1500 weight van she drove.</p> <p>How did you feel about having to drive such a big van? GB says she didn't mind, talks about driving most of her life and it being usual for women to drive. Comments on using her own car for MOW, route was already planned. Talks more about how they kept the food warm, always hot meals, mentions not having time to stop.</p> <p>Do you have anything else you would like to share about your time with WVS/WRVS? Mentions it was fun, not knowing what she was going to be doing each day. GB says she was asked to work for them in London but had to turn it down.</p> <p>Do you have a favourite moment of your time with WRVS? GB says not really but enjoyed whatever she did and carting the furniture around, didn't enjoy training as much.</p> <p>Do you know anything about the organisation as it is today? GB says she didn't but a while ago got a begging letter, talks about money and the organisation when she was a member. Talks about men coming in to the service, though originally they were just driving cars. GB says it was all about coping with things. Talks about working as a school cook and different environment from feeding with WRVS. GB mentions being shown how to put out pan fires.</p>
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