

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

### Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

**Ref. No.:** FINA

**Collection Title:** Voices of Volunteering

**Interviewee's Surname:** Findlay

**Title:** Mrs

**Interviewee's Forenames:** Alison

**Gender:** F

**Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:**

Volunteer 1986 to 2004, Perth, Perthshire,  
Scotland

Meals-on-Wheels

Old peoples Welfare Organiser

Emergency Services Organiser

Vice Chairman's Committee

Trustee

**Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To):** 05/06/2015 (Track 1)

**Location of Interview:** Interviewees home Perth Perthshire Scotland

**Location Interview is Deposited:** Royal Voluntary Service Archive and Heritage Collection, Devizes,  
Wiltshire

**Name of Interviewer:** Jennifer Anne Hunt

**Type of Recorder:** H5 Zoom

**Total no. tracks:** 1

**Mono or Stereo:** Stereo

**Recording Format:** WAV 44.1/16

**Total Duration:** 01:37:24

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

**Copyright:** Royal Voluntary Service

**Clearance:** Yes

**Interviewer's Notes:**

Alison Findlay (AF) talks about her time as a volunteer for WRVS between 1986 and 2004. During that time AF was a Meals-on-Wheels (MOW) deliverer, Old people's Welfare Organiser (OPW) and Emergency Services (ES) Organiser for Perthshire after the Perth Floods in 1993. In 1996 AF was asked to Join the Vice Chairman's Committee (VCC) and then in 1998 became a Trustee for the WRVS until 2004 when she resigned for the organisation. AF concludes with how the organisation changed while she was a member.



Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:09]	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Please can you introduce yourself?</b> AF introduces herself, how long she was in WRVS for, family.</p> <p><b>Why did you join WRVS?</b> Moved to the area in 1984, felt needed to do some volunteering, get involved in community.</p> <p><b>When did you join?</b> Card says 1986 but AF thinks she first got involved in 1984 as unofficial volunteer</p> <p><b>What did you know about WRVS before you joined?</b> Knew about MOW</p> <p><b>What are your earliest memories of WRVS?</b> AF talks about being in a large transit van and delivering MOW, being driven around by a man, not having proper seating. Comments on being a radiographer which did not really prepare her for how many old people there were.</p>
[00:06:57]	<p><b>Meals on Wheels</b></p> <p><b>You said you were driven around by men where they WRVS members?</b> Also WRVS volunteers, huge team in Perth covered 200,000 square miles.</p> <p><b>How often would you go out on a MOW round?</b> Once every three weeks, talks about numbers in the area and becoming the ES manager and using that team to get volunteers.</p> <p><b>How would you describe a typical MOW round?</b> Talks about going to the houses, five routes in Perth working closely with Social Work, how long the round took and the different factors that affected it. Comments on going into a gentleman's home when the man was in the bath. Mentions being able to keep an eye on the health and wellbeing of recipients. How many times people could be visited with a meal in one week, what was lost when they started delivering frozen meals. AF always delivered hot meals.</p> <p><b>What sort of food did you deliver?</b> Always soup a main course and a pudding, very wholesome meal, often people would keep the main course for later even though it was not regulation.</p> <p><b>Did you have a partner who you delivered with?</b> Yes, did swap around if could not do regular round, talks about changes in transport and MOW stopping in Perth. AF comments on not having the same contact today with MOW.</p> <p><b>Do you remember who was in charge of MOW?</b> Talks about Maggie being the final person in charge, does not think there was a MOW organiser in the area when she started but organised at the office based in Perth.</p>

<p>[00:11:15]</p>	<p>Rosalyn House where Social Work was also based there.</p> <p><b>Where the meals cooked by WRVS?</b> No cooked at the hospital, collected the van, collected the meal then went on the round.</p> <p><b>Do you have any other memories of MOW?</b> Talks about an elderly lady who AF called Missus, people being pleased to see you, talks about the vans and the containers taking off across the van when the roads were icy. Comments on volunteer gatherings and great camaraderie and you found out about other services at the meetings. Mentions having the clothing store and the office being very busy.</p> <p><b>You would have run a lot of services out of that van?</b> Talks about it being the county office as well, revelation when discovered all the WRVS services. AF talks about Jenny Milne who was the organiser who saw her in the garden and said she had time to do more for her.</p>
<p>[00:21:23]</p>	<p><b>Old People's Welfare Organiser</b></p> <p>Comments on experience of what OPW organiser was, mostly visiting Darby and Joan Clubs told did not really need to do anything as clubs ran themselves but no one ever went into thank them so AF saw this as her primary role. Comments on running a handicraft competition. Filled a huge hole in loneliness, clubs in very rural areas, talks about club activities, Christmas lunches, being a magicians assistant, being taught carpet bowls, AF talks about one lady coming to see her to ask if she thought she should still be running the club, AF asked why not and she said she had been doing it for a long time and was in her 90s.</p> <p><b>Did you take on other services in Old People's Welfare?</b> Talks about WRVS caravans, one brought by man for them in memory of his wife, comments on updating them, £10 for a week in the caravan, AF organised the let of it and everyone always wanted it in July. AF talks about getting people who were on their own a holiday in Christian Centres. Comments on some of the people who they took on holiday and activities. Comments on becoming the ES organiser after the Perth floods.</p>
<p>[00:28:10]</p>	<p><b>Emergency Services Organiser</b></p> <p><b>Where you involved in ES before you became the organiser?</b> No, talks about history in WRVS, in Perth only had a very small team and often did teas and coffees for events. Comments on WRVS work during the Perth Floods. After the Floods AF got involved in ES and was asked by Avril Duncan to set up a team, mentions training in Edinburgh and Easingwold. Comments on becoming a senior trainer for ES, getting as many people on board which was not always approved, Betty Bridgeford paid for most of AF's training and organised teams in villages and towns. Talks about ES work when it snowed and people could not get out of Perth and on the A9. AF came up with a new concept of the rest centre registration process by putting it on computer. Mentions gaining the respect of Social Work and Police, helping with Police forums in</p>

<p>[00:40:55]</p> <p>[00:51:22]</p> <p>[00:56:47]</p>	<p>Perth, talks about the people who volunteered for ES, Police helping with training. Comments on how volunteers were trained.</p> <p><b>Did you have many emergencies in Perthshire?</b> Comments on covering for Dundee in an emergency when a hotel went on fire. Another occasion asked to go over to Fife when there was a gas problem in the area. Mentions not having an emergency that was comparable to the 1993 floods, goes back to talking about taking people on holiday after the floods and interviewing one lady who when the weather was bad sat all night with a suitcase and a coat on. Also comments on the benefit of taking elderly people away after the floods. Mentions taking part in an event on the North Inch.</p> <p><b>Did you find that ES changed?</b> Talks about paid organisers and managers coming in which she did not feel worked as well. Comments on situations where you would be on standby, having a line of call out, having local knowledge or need for it. Discusses having to feed people and taking people to the rest centre and dealing with people locally rather than from a distance.</p> <p><b>When you were an ES organiser where you also a Company member and on VCC?</b> Yes on VCC but when she became a trustee had someone to take over ES as she was away a lot more.</p>
<p>[01:06:29]</p>	<p><b>VCC/Trustee</b></p> <p><b>How did you become a VCC member?</b> Not sure, thinks because she showed willing, new people at Scottish HQ in Edinburgh. Asked to be on VCC at the time Alice Cleland was Vice-Chair, Elaine Ross was the Scottish Organiser at the time. Meetings were all at Milton Hill which is no more, might have attended one meeting in London when WRVS had the Brixton Office. Four VCC's in Scotland, divided Scotland between them, went out to speak about WRVS handed out medals, talks about some of the duties of being on VCC. Comments on becoming a trustee about two years after joining VCC. Found being a trustee challenging but wonderful, six years, organising things in Scotland, and attending meetings all over Britain.</p> <p><b>Do you remember who the chairman was at the time?</b> Lady Elizabeth Toulson for 1 or 2 years and then Tina Tijents, Gerry Burton and Mark leaver as Chief Executives.</p> <p><b>Did they have different styles of management as well?</b> Yes explains how Mark Leaver and Gerry Burton were different. Talks about having when on the Board of trustees.</p> <p><b>What was changing about WRVS when you were a trustee?</b> Talks about paid staff being brought in and why she thought this happened. Comments on volunteers having to prove themselves to staff. Experience in Inverness of someone being derogatory about volunteers.</p>

