

# Voices of Volunteering: 75 Years of Citizenship and Service

## Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

**Ref. No.:** GALG

**Collection Title:** Voices of Volunteering

**Interviewee's Surname:** Galloway

**Title:** Mrs

**Interviewee's Forenames:** Gillian (Gilli)

**Gender:** F

**Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:**

Employee 1993-1997

1993, Community Services Divisional Manager,  
Wales

1993-1997, Community Services Manager, South  
East Division

Volunteer 1997-Present (2014)

1997-1998, Company Member

1998-2004, Trustee and Main Board Member –  
6 years

2010-Present (2014), (Vice Chair since March

2014)Benevolent Trust

Other Volunteer Roles 1993-Present (2014)

Emergency Services, Norfolk

Rest Centre Training, Norfolk

**Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To):** 10/07/2014 (Track 1)

**Location of Interview:** Interviewees Home, Wisbech, Norfolk

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

**Name of Interviewer:** Jennifer Anne Hunt

**Type of Recorder:** H4n Zoom

**Total no. tracks:** 1

**Mono or Stereo:** Stereo

**Recording Format:** WAV 44.1/16

**Total Duration:** 01:54:24

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

**Copyright:** Royal Voluntary Service

**Clearance:** Yes

**Interviewer's Notes:**

Gilli Galloway (GG) talks about her work as a WRVS employee between 1993 and 1997 as a Community Services Divisional Manager in Wales and then South East England. She mentions services provided by WRVS during the 1990s including Meals-on-Wheels (MOW), Emergency Services (ES), Hospitals, clubs and children's holidays. GG then comments on being a company member for a year before it was replaced by the Vice Chairman's Committee in 1998. Also discusses her role as a trustee and board member during a time of change in the organisation between 1998 and 2004. GG mentions her role as a volunteer for Emergency Services (ES) in WRVS including some of the emergencies and exercises she had attended. Training and rest centre demonstrations are also mentioned, GG moves on to talk about her earlier involvement in Contact centre training and preparing to hand it over to the Association of National Contact Centres. GG talks about her more recent involvement with Royal Voluntary Service (RVS) and the WRVS Benevolent Trust and gives her opinions on the current situation in the organisation. She concludes with three of her favourite memories about WRVS: Meeting the Queen at Milton Hill, the Royal Garden Party and removing flowers from outside Kensington Palace after Princess Diana's funeral.

Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:09]	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><b>Gilli would you just like to introduce yourself?</b> GG talks about being in WRVS for 20 years, the variety of roles she has had during that time as an employee and volunteer.</p> <p><b>Tell me about your earliest memories of WRVS</b> GG comments on going to the Divisional headquarters in Cardiff and being one of the first properly paid members of staff. Talks about her first day, gaining the trust of the volunteers.</p> <p><b>How did you find out about the Community Services Divisional Manager role?</b> It was advertised in the local paper, always had an interest in that sort of work, Mother had been through First and Second World War and had volunteered, brought up in volunteering culture. GG talks about the interview and the pay being very minimal as some of the work was a voluntary contribution.</p> <p><b>What did you know about WRVS before you joined?</b> 'Only what I had come into contact with', GG mentions some of the services she knew of, MOW and Hospital Tea Bars but did not know about the huge range of services provided at the time. Talks about the services which she was responsible for including Hospitals, MOW and ES.</p> <p><b>What was your opinion of the organisation before you joined in 1993?</b> GG says she was concerned it would be 'Stodgy' and 'Old Fashioned', 'formidable ladies in Green uniform and there were some formidable ladies in green uniform'. Talks about the passion of volunteers, the budgets, not having mobile phones.</p>

[00:03:46]	<p><b>Community Services Divisional Manager Wales</b></p> <p><b>How would you describe your role as Community Services Divisional Manager?</b>  GG talks about gathering information about what people were doing in different areas and grew quickly. Mentions how this was difficult from an accounting and corporate point of view. Comments on helping with projects, helping to recruit volunteers, producing resources, policies, training, poster, events.</p> <p><b>What events were you helping with?</b>  Went to an event in North Wales with a colleague, arrived late, starving and ‘dying’ for a cup of tea. Then they realised they had to judge the Easter bonnet competition and then ‘this extremely elderly gentleman came in lugging this organ and set it up in the corner, which took him a long time to do and then he only had time to play one song’. GG talks about it being a very unorganised experience but absolutely lovely. GG mentions another event where she was in the office the day after the ES team had been called out to a fire at a polish factory in Cardiff, asked to go in work wear and orange tabards, it rained and the dye of the tabard ran. Comments on ‘routine visits’ and they were all different as people had funny and sad stories. GG mentions the difficulties of the job. Felt that you had to apologise for being a manager. Clubs made an identity for themselves.</p> <p><b>Can you tell me about the other employees you worked with?</b>  Talks about the office she shared with a colleague, mentions her divisional director and the receptionist being the person ‘who glued the place together’. Mentions moving into modern offices and turning out the old office. Talks about Margaret Davies ‘knew everyone and everything in WRVS’. Comments on her line manager Jan King being ‘larger than life’. Talks about still keeping in touch with the national team today through the Benevolent trust. Mentions the cars they had to drive in, changes to the organisation, time of camaraderie.</p>
[00:12:51]	<p><b>Were there also volunteers at the office?</b>  Talks about the carol concert in City Hall Cardiff, not being able to sing the national anthem and being taught it phonetically, some cliques but it was all part of it. Volunteers thought the pictures of managers in uniform on the wall. Managers brought structure but volunteers knew how it actually worked.</p> <p><b>What services did community services involve?</b>  ‘Everything that wasn’t MOW, emergency services and hospitals’. GG discusses prison work, court tea bars, Children’s Contact Centres, Darby and Joan Clubs, children’s holidays, books on wheels. Talks about traveling and ‘two days not being the same’ and why.</p> <p><b>Why did you say that children’s holidays could be interesting?</b>  Most of the children were from very disadvantaged backgrounds, visited the home before they went on holiday, collected donations of things the children needed, Atlantic college were students had to do community work and ran the activities. Discusses the ethics of giving disadvantaged children a holiday and then sending them</p>

	<p>home again. GG describes some of the incidents that happened on the holiday. Also mentions family holidays in caravans and helping volunteers to understand the people on the holidays.</p>
[00:21:30]	<p><b>Community Services Manager South East</b></p> <p><b>Then you moved to the South East, was that different from Wales?</b> GG says yes and mentions why she moved to Eastbourne. Talks about the office which had a lunch club in it, talks about the lino on the floor being very hard. Then a few months later moved again and asked to be a company member.</p>
[00:22:48]	<p><b>Company member 1997-1998</b></p> <p><b>What were the WRVS company members?</b> Had a direct line to the board and be a connection between them and the volunteers. Precursor to Vice-Chairman's Committee, GG talks about Alice Cleland changing it to her committee. Company members checked plans, kept GG connected with the organisation.</p> <p><b>At that time what sort of plans were the board making?</b> Talks about centralisation of the charity, closing of offices, volunteer's reactions to the changes that were being made. There was an increase in accounting, before volunteers had not had tills. Remembers having to get accountants to write off money that had been stolen from biscuit tins. Changes put volunteers and project managers in difficult positions. GG mentions the end of the government grant being awarded to the charity, idea of being a fundraising organisation did not go down well so had to look into funding and cutbacks. GG mentions it being difficult and unsettling.</p> <p><b>Why was it difficult and unsettling?</b> GG comments on why people worked or volunteered for WRVS, the organisation had not really put pressure on people. There had been an assumption of accountability but suddenly asked to evidence it and made it very commercial.</p>
[00:29:04]	<p><b>Who were the other company members?</b> GG mentions a few names of company members at the time. Talks more about the end of the company members and start of Vice Chairman's Committee.</p> <p><b>What were your opinions of the changes?</b> GG says the changes needed to be made so the business could be run but from the view point of volunteers and getting them to understand why it had to be done. GG was not sure if they got it right, could not get everyone on board and had to understand why.</p>
[00:32:32]	<p><b>Trustee and Main Board Member 1998-2004</b></p> <p><b>You became a trustee and board member in 1998, how would you describe your role as a trustee?</b> GG says it 'was absolutely fascinating', talks about the process before during and after the meeting, the responsibilities, financial and moral. Talks about different Chief Executives, and board members and their business backgrounds. Comments on the insight she got from this perspective. Mentions the change to orange and purple logo,</p>

[00:39:36]	<p>road shows call capture the spirit, rationalising projects as budget was changing. Talks about having cups of coffee at 1 o'clock in the morning. Talks about the relationship between the Chairman and Chief Executive and professionalism. Comments on how lucky the board were to have the Vice-Chair and Vice Chairman's Committee.</p> <p><b>Do you know why the Vice Chairman's Committee was phased out?</b> GG talks about the drive towards commercialisation, the change to board members with no one with connections to WRVS as volunteers. Mentions some of the members of the committee. Talks about visiting Milton Hill and staying in the accommodation.</p>
[00:44:54]	<p><b>You mentioned you had Mark Leaver and Gerry Burton as Chief executive, how are they different from each other?</b> GG talks about Mark Leaver's style of management compared with Gerry Burton's management style.</p> <p><b>You also had Elizabeth Toulson and Tina Tijens, how was that different?</b> 'That was very different'. GG talks about the different chairman, Tina Tijens connection and leadership style. Before WRVS had a very family feel to it with Elizabeth were as Tina brought in a commercial element.</p> <p><b>You talked before about the change to purple and orange, why was that decision made?</b> Trying to bring it up to date, volunteer numbers were falling off, women who would have volunteered before now worked, no natural replenishment of volunteers as there was before. Personally GG did not like the new colours but thought it was striking.</p>
[00:52:23]	<p><b>How did the volunteers react to that?</b> GG talks about going to Northampton with Mark Leaver and some other trustees to a roadshow, and mentions the reaction of a volunteer who refused to wear the new uniform. Another response was that they could live with it because it was not about the uniform.</p> <p><b>Did the trustees make any other decisions?</b> GG talks about people being on a transition project looking at the services WRVS, what they should not be doing and what they were doing that no one else was. Mentions the example of contact centres and passing them on to the Association of National Contact Centres. Comments on the training for contact centres, why some projects closed and seeing those in financial difficult or had very few volunteers. Describes how they helped volunteers to close down projects and volunteer reactions to this work.</p>
[00:57:00]	<p><b>Why was it decided just to focus on older people, Hospitals and ES?</b> GG talks about some of the community service projects that WRVS kept, visitors' centres, and community transport. Talks more about losing volunteers to other organisations as they transferred services to other groups.</p>
[00:59:22]	<p><b>Emergency Services Volunteer</b></p> <p><b>When you left the board, you were involved with ES as a volunteer ...</b> GG talks about it being hard leaving the board and not being as connected, mentions getting a few call outs but still felt disconnected. Talks about still having a bag under the</p>

[01:09:26]	<p>stairs for ES and its contents. The last call out was to a train crash near Kings Lynn Speedway Stadium. Comments on what she took to the emergency, the volunteers who came, the arrival of National Rail's Welcome Wagon, the passengers, the train and the tractors condition. Talks about the decline of ES and charging for the service.</p> <p><b>Have you been on any exercises or training?</b> GG talks about attending and giving rest centre training to not just WRVS volunteers but people outside the organisation because of the area having a number of flight paths. Comments on how interesting training can be as people take pets to rest centres, people forget medication. Discusses using live actors to run a live exercise and more of the issues of setting up rest centres today in rural areas with mixed populations.</p> <p><b>How do you feel when you are called out on an emergency?</b> 'Your adrenalin goes buzzing' GG talks about the apprehension at first but wanting to get there and having to witness very unpleasant incidents. Sometimes you're dealing with stress and trauma.</p> <p><b>You were also delivering training to volunteers, what sort of training?</b> GG talks about rest centre, contact centre, introducing food hygiene training and till training. Volunteers could bring life experiences which make training interesting.</p>
[01:14:00]	<p><b>Contact Centre</b></p> <p><b>How would you describe the contact centres role?</b> It was a halfway house for absent parents to visit their children, normally under court order for visitation. Some parents would not turn up with the child, hard for the volunteers not to feel something but had to be very natural. GG talks about some of the reasons why the centres were needed and how volunteers helped the parents. Comments on donations of play equipment.</p> <p><b>You also mentioned you wrote the training guide...</b> GG talks about volunteer input into the guide along with advisors, all part of getting more structure into the organisation and becoming more compliant. Mentions getting it ready for NECC. GG comments on trailing the new guide and training, the difference in culture and diversity which they had to convey to volunteers.</p>
[01:23:35]	<p><b>Benevolent trust 2010-2014</b></p> <p><b>How would describe your role on the trust?</b> GG talks about now being the vice chair and supporting Shelia Murray the Chair. Joined the trust as GG wanted to be more engaged with WRVS again. In a position to give away funds. Comments on looking at applications, volunteer, staff members, Lady Reading Factor, look at finances, check volunteering and confirm with project managers but harder with older volunteers. The RVS Archivist helps to back track as far as possible. GG mentions the different things people have asked them to fund. Also talks about paying for the same thing on a yearly basis and reviewing it. Talks about when she was first on the board and marketing and media work and getting a phone call from a student doctor who had been a volunteer and wondered if they would fund her elective. This lead to funding through Youth Bursary and GG gives examples of what</p>

	<p>they have funded. GG comments on linking up with SAFFA to help get the word out to more people about the bursary and Trust. Discusses advertising on social media.</p>
[01:37:24]	<p><b>Organisation Today/Conclusions</b></p> <p><b>Since you started in 1993 how has your opinion of the charity changed?</b>  GG talks about her concerns about disconnections between grass roots and decision makers. Thinks there is a feeling that it is being run too much like a business, GG understands why but thinks they might be missing the link which gets people to volunteer. GG mentions the Hubs being a good thing and going back to having a local focus for volunteers. Concerns about the focus on elderly people, brand recognition for getting volunteers but not how the charity is run on the ground. Discusses fundraising and legacies and having to compete with Age UK, suggests reasons around mergers of charities.</p>
[01:42:55]	<p><b>What is the most significant change you have experienced?</b>  GG talks again about disconnecting with the volunteers so volunteers don't feel like they are being looked after. The Vice Chairman's Committee had that link but when it went nothing replaced it. Talks about visiting as a board member and compares it to a royal visit as you don't really see what happens.</p> <p><b>What would you say is your most treasured memory of working with WRVS?</b>  'I think two and they are both to do with the Queen', GG talks about the Queen's visit to WRVS's garden party at Milton Hill when it rained and GG's hat collapsed, it then had to go in the bin before the queen arrived.</p> <p>GG also took a group of volunteers to the Royal Garden Party and Gerry Burton was still Chief Executive at the time hosted lunch for them at a club in London. Comments on the anticipation of meeting the queen.</p> <p>GG mentions working on Princess Diana's Funeral and clearing the flowers from the area. Talks about some of the gifts left at Kensington Palace and some of the people who bought flowers to the palace. GG remembers a report jumping on the car when she was driving it wanting to interview her.</p>