

Voices of Volunteering: 75 Years of Citizenship and Service

Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

Ref. No.: HALM

Collection Title: Voices of Volunteering

Interviewee's Surname: Hall

Title: Mrs

Interviewee's Forenames: Maureen

Gender: F

Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:

Volunteer from November 1976-Present (2015)
1976-Present (2015) Norton-Canes Darby & Joan Club
1976-1986 Tea Bar at Featherstone Prison
1976-1991 Emergency Services
1976-2001 Meals on Wheels

Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To): 26/02/2015 (Track 1)

Location of Interview: Interviewees Home, Norton-Canes, Staffordshire

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:

Additional Material: Biography Sheet and Recording Agreement

Copyright: Royal Voluntary Service

Clearance: Yes

Interviewer's Notes:

Maureen Hall (MH) talks about her experience of being a WRVS volunteer in Norton-Canes, Staffordshire, from 1976 to present (2015). She describes her work with the Prison Tea Bar at Featherstone, as part of the Meals on Wheels service (MOW) which she undertook for approximately 25 years and with the Emergency Services which she was involved with for 15 years. She also talks about her role as part of the Darby and Joan Club which she is still currently involved with. MH has been the Secretary of the club and also its leader until approximately 2011 and currently acts as the Vice-Chairman of the club's committee. MH also talks about the holidays and outings she has organised for the club and all of the sponsorship work she has done for WRVS, such as a sponsored swim for the Toy

Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:01]	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Maureen would you just like to introduce yourself? MH states that she has been in the WRVS since 1976 and that she heard about the organisation through her mother-in-law who volunteered with the Darby and Joan Club and that she is still volunteering today. She describes that she has worked with the Darby and Joan Club, the Prison Tea Bar at Featherstone and MOW for approximately 25 years describing the experience and how she was sorry it closed. Maureen also describes her first duties with the Emergency Services assisting with the gas leak at Norton Race Track, Chipping-Norton.</p>
[00:03:28]	<p>You mention you became involved because of your mother-in-law are there any other reasons that you joined WRVS? MH describes that she used to work part time but gave that up to look after her mother-in-law and decided to join when she passed away. Maureen also talks about working in an office at Stafford and being offered the opportunity to join WRVS at 18 with the offer of learning to drive, describing that she was put off because she was told she would be one of the first ones called up if there was a war. Maureen also says that she received a letter from WRVS when her mother-in-law died asking her to join and describes the personal benefits of volunteering.</p> <p>What are your earliest memories of volunteering for WRVS? Talks about looking after the older people and enjoying doing so, telling a story of one lady whose husband went missing and turned out to be at a friend's house having cake and tea. Describes how she always works at the Darby and Joan club every Wednesday afternoon and that she dare not go anywhere else on that day, saying that the role kept her busy during her husband's illness and that she really enjoys it. MH also talks of the holidays she used to arrange for the Darby and Joan clubs telling a story about a trip to Scotland where one of the group, who was 90 met a 'chappy' up there and they were worried he would not bring her back.</p>
[00:08:46]	<p>How would you describe what a Darby and Joan Club is? MH talks about not knowing where the name originated from, but the to her it is about old people, elderly couples. She then goes on to talk about her mother-in-laws service on the Darby and Joan Committee and also during the Second World War, including having a refugee to stay. She also describes how she became leader of the Darby and Joan Club and talks about reaching 100 members, needing to put names on a waiting list as there were no places available. Maureen also talks about activities undertaken at the club, such as bingo, but that the members mainly come for a good old natter with tea and biscuits and when they turn 80 they get a party. She also talks about the benefits to the members, getting to see people and getting out of the house. Talked about her granddaughter coming to help</p>

<p>[00:14:04]</p>	<p>during her free time at College and that it is hard to get young people to come and volunteer and that if they did it would do them good.</p> <p>Where is the Darby and Joan Club? It is located in the Community Centre, Brownhills Road, Norton-Canes, she explains that it used to be across the road from the current building but when the land was brought and houses built a new community centre was provided, with the club moving in in 2000 with the Parish Council giving them a grant towards equipment. MH mentions that the Community Centre is not council run and is instead volunteer run stating that she was on the committee for 15 years. MH describes the activities that take place at the centre aside from the Darby and Joan Club. Describes that there is a mini bus which picks up members and brings them to the club and talks about the trip which they will soon be going on.</p>
<p>[00:16:46]</p>	<p>Where did you have the club before it moved? It was in the old community centre across the road which was getting dilapidated. Speaks of another WRVS club that used to come from Etching Hill, Rugeley but that once their organisation reached 80 years old she could no longer run the club and there was no one to replace her so it closed. MH also talks about the Mad Hatters Tea Party where both clubs met and dressed up.</p> <p>Could you tell me about the different roles you've had at the club? MH describes that she started off as Secretary and then after 2-3 years became the leader and stayed in this position until about 6 years ago and that this year (2015) Maureen would have been with the club for 39 years. She is now the Vice-Chairman. Mentions that she did used to do the holidays for them as well and that she did used to take on a lot of the responsibility and was told by one of the members that she needed to delegate. MH also talks about the fancy dress parties and the Christmas dinners she used to organise.</p>
<p>[00:22:35]</p>	<p>Where did you take them on holiday? Went to numerous places such as: Scotland, Glasgow, Devon, Cornwall, Wales, Tenby, with MH describing the trip to Jersey on the plane, the trip to Anglesey on a boat and the day trip to Guernsey on a Hover boat.</p> <p>What other services have you been involved with? MH talks about working on the Tea Bar at Featherstone Prison, describing what they sold and the tour they were given of the prison. She also describes her work on MOW service, sometimes at the same time as the Tea Bar which was a bit of a rush so she gave the Tea Bar which she had been doing for approximately ten years. MH also did Emergency Services for about 15 years until she had an accident with her own car during an emergency services call out which she describes. Also talks about assisting with refugees by sorting clothes at the old RAF camps at Pye Green, Hednesford. MH also describes the fire at Cannock Chase and how she helped with sandwiches and cups of tea. She also talks about the training she received for her Emergency Services work. MH also supported the Toy Library at Cannock Library by doing a sponsored swim to raise funds to buy toys. She has also done sponsored slims asking the members of the Darby</p>

[00:39:54]	<p>and Joan Club to sponsor her.</p> <p>You mentioned your work with Meals on Wheels? MH mentions that she worked on this service for 25 years in numerous areas, starting with Cannock and then Heath House and Hednesford, describing her experience of the service. She also talks about how the food was served and the different places she collected the meals from such as Cannock Hospital and within several schools. MH tells a story about one recipient who would always make her take an apple with her. She also talks about how they would always go in pairs and that her neighbour used to accompany her and tells a story of falling over on a round.</p>
[00:46:14]	<p>Where did you collect the meals from? Cannock Hospital, St John's School, Cannock and another school which MH could not remember the name of. The meals were all collected from Cannock and taken to places like Hednesford, Pye Green, Norton-Canes. MH then remembers that she used to help serve the food at a luncheon club at the Methodist Chapel, Norton-Canes.</p> <p>You also helped with planting trees? All the WRVS were involved, and those on the Darby and Joan Club committee helped by going to Bridgedown and planting trees in a field alongside a new road which had been built, with MH describing the process.</p>
[00:49:48]	<p>Also went to a garden party at Milton Hill in Oxford? MH says she was not sure what the celebration was for, but that about 10 or 12 of the people on the committee went, describing that they were all in their finery and saw the queen, describing how lovely the day was.</p> <p>Have you been to any other WRVS events? MH says that she had not been to any other events, but then remembers that she attended the 75th Anniversary celebrations at St Pauls Cathedral and that it was a really lovely day, describing the trip down and the event.</p>
[00:56:12]	<p>When you went to the service at St Pauls did they announce the name change? MH said that this was not mentioned and that she was surprised that it was changing. She does mention that she had an idea something was happening as during a long service medal presentation at the Darby and Joan Club there was no medal presented just a pin. MH describes how disgusted the recipients were and that one had not returned to the club since. MH also describes her role of laying the wreath at Remembrance Sunday and how she always wears her uniform and hat for the occasion. MH also talks about the changes of the organisations name and about how many men used to drive for the MOW service.</p>

<p>[01:00:30]</p> <p>[01:04:46]</p> <p>[01:07:58]</p>	<p>Conclusions</p> <p>Has the charity changed in any other ways since you've been a member? MH mentions that she feels it is very hard to get people to join, especially the young people and that it is difficult to get them interested, describing that she feels this is because they want to work and earn money. She then describes the benefits of volunteering.</p> <p>Is there anything that we haven't talked about today that you would like to mention? MH says that she feels that everything has been covered during the interview.</p> <p>In your opinion what has been the biggest change to WRVS since you joined? She says that she feels the biggest change within her local area is the closure of the MOW service. Also she feels that people's attitudes have changed and that they no longer want to do voluntary work, wanting paid employment instead. MH feels that they should talk about voluntary work more in schools.</p> <p>Where do you think Royal Voluntary Service's place is in society today? MH says she is not sure, and that you do not really hear about the organisation anymore or the work they do and that the organisation is not well advertised. She also mentions that she thinks the closure of the offices had a negative effect as people no longer know where to go to receive information.</p> <p>What do you think is the future for Royal Voluntary Service? MH says that she does not know and feels that it will be down to getting younger people interested and that she hopes the organisation will continue.</p> <p>What is your most memorable moment? MH says that it was attending both the 75th Anniversary service at St Pauls Cathedral and also the garden party in Oxford.</p>