

Voices of Volunteering: 75 Years of Citizenship and Service

Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

Ref. No.: KAYE

Collection Title: Voices of Volunteering

Interviewee's Surname: Kay

Title: Mrs

Interviewee's Forenames: Elizabeth

Gender: F

Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:

Volunteer (c1960-1990)

Drugs Abuse Talks

One-in-Five

Keep Fit for Elderly

Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To): 09/05/2014 (Track 1)

Location of Interview: Interviewee's home, Kinson, Bournemouth

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

Name of Interviewer: Jennifer Hunt

Type of Recorder: H4n Zoom

Total no. tracks: 1

Mono or Stereo: Stereo

Recording Format: WAV 44.1/16

Total Duration: 01:29:57

Additional Material: Recording Agreement, Biography Form, Heritage Bulletin December 1970, No.371, p.17 *Movement and Music in Hounslow*, ACCWRVS20140028.

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Clearance: Yes

Interviewer's Notes:

Elizabeth Kay (EK) talks about her role in WVS in Chiswick and then as a speaker for the talks on Drugs Abuse given by WVS/WRVS members in the late 1960s early 1970s in the UK and at Army barracks in Germany. Also mentions her relationship with Lady Reading and being asked to give One-in-Five talks after the Drugs Abuse talks were ended.

Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:09]	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Elizabeth, can you please tell me a little about yourself? EK says she is 86, talks about her family and why she now lives in Kinson Bournemouth.</p> <p>When did you start volunteering for WVS? When her youngest daughter was 5 and wanted to give something back. EK found out about people needing help to weigh babies and met WVS members through that and asked to help with BOW, MOW, the Clothing Department. EK mentions how they had to store the clothes in the store.</p> <p>Comments on a friend at the local church, also a WVS member, asking if she could put EK forward for talks on drug taking. Mentions who Lady Reading wanted to train to give the talks and why she thought the talks were important.</p> <p>Before you joined WVS what did you know about the organisation? EK explains that she knew about them during the war (World War II). Talks about WVS bringing round evacuees and having one to stay at her home. EK says she also knew that WVS did social work which she thought was good also comments on what she thought of members and that there were very few working class women in the organisation.</p>
[00:07:44]	<p>Early Years as a Volunteer</p> <p>What was a MOW round like? EK talks about delivering in Chiswick and Hounslow to 20 people and describes the meals which they served to people. Also mentions who they delivered to but it was taken over by a commercial enterprise so moved to BOW.</p> <p>What were you doing on BOW? EK was driven by a WVS lady who could drive, talks about choosing, collecting and delivering books from people. Mentions having 15 people on a round every two weeks.</p> <p>And you were also working in the clothing depot ... EK talks about the clothing depot in Chiswick as well as Headquarters next to the town hall. Mentions that she learnt how to stack the clothing, how the clothing was distributed and that people were given what they needed. Comments on the difficulty of providing people with nappies because they were not disposable.</p> <p>And do you remember any of the people who came into the clothing store? EK said that she doesn't and felt most of them wanted to remain anonymous.</p>

[00:13:22]	<p>Drugs Abuse Lectures</p> <p>You were asked to give talks on drug abuse? EK explains that she was asked if she would be interested in training to give the talks because she was in a local andram club. EK comments on how she was selected for the training and seemed suitable. 'Lady Reading said she thought I spoke out well'. Comments more on Lady Reading.</p> <p>Talks about what was included in the talks and that they had to write their own. Mentions why WVS decided to give the talks and what she thought about the scheme. EK talks about giving the talks to a committee, at the House of Lords and at the House of Commons.</p> <p>How did you feel about being chosen to go to the House of Lords and House of Commons? EK comments that she didn't realise how important it was. The talk was not really for the audience and EK mentions some of the questions asked by the audience. Also gave a talk to an advisory group possibly in Chester or Birmingham with Lady Reading present <i>[at this point an airplane can be heard in the background]</i>.</p>
[00:20:12]	<p>Comments on being asked to go and give the talks in Berlin to Army wives.</p> <p>Do you want to tell me about when you went to Berlin to give the talks? EK talks about it being an adventure going through the Iron Curtain, transport to Berlin, how she felt about flying in a small plane, how she was received, how army families are different. EK comments on the issues with giving the talks including a lack of publicity and misunderstandings about who the talk was for. Talks about only giving the talk to 8 people, being interviewed by the Forces Radio so the next talk was better attended. EK felt it was a waste of money and wrote a report about the trip.</p> <p>EK talks about dining in the Officers' mess in the evenings as she had an officer status, being flirted with by officers.</p>
[00:26:12]	<p>And did you give talks when you were back in England? EK mentions she still has some of the letters, women's clubs were interested because WRVS speakers were free. Also EK learnt to drive so she could go further afield.</p> <p>Comments on the talks being held for eight years and why they were stopped. Drug abuse and issues had changed dramatically and women were going out to work. EK went on to give talks on other subjects using her WRVS experience.</p>
[00:28:25]	<p>Mentions local WRVS office moving from Chiswick to Hounslow and then helping with Age UK at their Headquarters, then started giving talks on different subjects including one on umbrellas and nursery rhymes. 'WRVS gave me more than just Learning to do the drugs talks'.</p>

<p>[00:30:40]</p> <p>[00:36:24]</p> <p>[00:37:14]</p>	<p>EK talks about being trained to be a keep fit teacher and having the idea of going to the local care home. Comments on using old songs and doing actions for people. Talks about being in the local newspaper and in the WRVS Bulletin.</p> <p>Mentions how people sang the songs and having someone to play the piano and became sponsored by the local authority. EK describes a time when the Matron apologised because of comments made by a resident. Also talks about learning the songs and buying the music.</p> <p>EK comments on how her family situation made her want to be busy and how she had two lives.</p> <p>You were also involved with the One-in-Five scheme, how would you describe the aims of that scheme? EK says that it was to prepare people for nuclear attack but looking back on it now knows that it wouldn't have been safe. EK explains that she was not involved for very long and explains it was because she and he husband went travelling.</p>
<p>[00:49:27]</p> <p>[00:51:19]</p> <p>[00:53:45]</p>	<p>Before we were talking about Lady Reading, how would you describe her as a character? EK comments that she was very grand and very aware of her status, new that women in WRVS were of a different class and always found it amusing that Lady Reading thought she had trained EK to be a speaker. EK talks about how sincere Lady Reading was and admired her for the work she did and needed people who could relate to the people receiving the talks.</p> <p>And after she died did you notice a change in WRVS? Yes, what were those changes? EK comments that the organisation became less static and was run by different people in a different class, became middle class rather than upper or upper-middle class. EK also talks about going to the funeral service and meeting people from the home office who said they had not forgotten the drugs talk. Mentions the vice chairman giving a speech.</p> <p>Did you come across Lady Lucas-Tooth while you were giving the drugs talks and what was she like? EK comments on how she was younger than Lady Reading, was an interesting person.</p> <p>Did you receive training for One-in-Five? Yes but were given a package with the information in, not authorised as the drug talks were. Didn't really feel could give talks as she didn't believe in them.</p> <p>Did you come across any other issues with the talks? Mentions CND campaigned to get them stopped because they didn't feel WRVS were of the right class. Mentions both she and her daughter were at Greenham common and gave talks for CND.</p>

[01:05:30]	<p>Do you have any connections with WRVS? EK comments no; doesn't even know where it is now. Feels she is too old now to be involved and not accepted locally. EK now goes to the Towns Women's Guild and still gives talks.</p> <p>Mentions giving a talk about a tortoise for Tina who is a Royal Voluntary Service Service Manager for Dorset. Mentions who got her involved in with WRVS again.</p>
[01:13:27]	<p>Do you have any other memories or stories you would like to share? EK mentions getting lost when finding a WRVS club, talks about being asked not to use a microphone because she could be heard without one at the club. Also comments on talking to each person at the club and how people there felt about that.</p>
[01:16:44]	<p>Did other people giving the talks have to write their own? EK says she believes that they all had to write their own talks based on notes given at the residential course but wanted to have hers as a more theatrical talk and instead of using a chalk board had a blanket with headlines so people could see the names of the drugs. Mentions how much publicity there was for the talks through Lady Reading's secretary.</p> <p>Talks about the talks being well received by people and all the letters she received from people/groups she gave the talk to.</p>
[01:21:15]	<p>Do you have a most treasured memory of your time with WRVS? EK talks about weighing babies and the young mothers who came in, the questions they ask WVS members, going to mother craft and using the Truby King method.</p>