

Voices of Volunteering: 75 Years of Citizenship and Service

Interview Summary Sheet

Title Page

Ref. No.: MANC

Collection Title: Voices of Volunteering

Interviewee's Surname: Manby

Title: Mrs

Interviewee's Forenames: Christine

Gender: F

Volunteer/Employee Roles and Dates:

Volunteer 1992-Present(2014)

1992-1995, Deputy Emergency Services

Organiser – promoted to Emergency Services

Organiser, Sheffield

1995-1996 – Deputy Metropolitan Organiser,
Sheffield

1996-2000 – Area Emergency Services Organiser,
South Yorkshire

2000-2010 – Regional Emergency Services, East
Midlands and South Yorkshire

2010-Present (2014) – Resilience & Recovery
Volunteer, Sheffield

Date(s) of recording, Tracks (From-To): 05/08/2014 (track 1)

Location of Interview: Interviewees home, Sheffield, South Yorkshire

Location Interview Deposited: Royal Voluntary Service Archive & 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: 01:40:31

Additional Material: Recording Agreement and Biography Sheet

Copyright: Royal Voluntary Service

Clearance: Yes

Interviewer's Notes:

Christine Manby (CM) talks about her voluntary work with WRVS between 1992 and 2014 when the interview took place. She was first involved in a Luncheon club in Sheffield and was later asked to join the Emergency Services (ES) Team. CM comments on being a Deputy Metropolitan Organiser (DMO) in

Sheffield and getting involved with children's holidays and hospitals. Then she talks about being Area Emergency Services Organiser in South Yorkshire, some of the emergencies which took place such as Great Heck train crash. CM also comments on becoming a Regional Emergency Services Organiser and taking on Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire. Some more recent emergencies CM attended were the Sheffield Floods (2007) and a bomb Scare in Sheffield (2014). CM also talks about her OBE and other recognition WRVS in Sheffield have received for ES. She then mentions how restructures to the organisation have affected ES, Volunteers and her role in WRVS. To conclude CM comments on what the biggest change to the charity has been (in her opinion), Royal Voluntary Service's (RVS) place in Society today, Its future and her most treasured memory of her time with WRVS.

Time (HH:MM:SS)	Synopsis
[00:00:07]	<p>Introduction</p> <p>Christine, would you just like to introduce yourself? CM talks about where she is and her career before joining WRVS in Sheffield.</p> <p>What is your earliest memory of WRVS? CM comments on when she moved to Sheffield, her husband got a job in Social Services, thought she would like to do something and heard on the radio about the need for volunteers for the First Gulf War. She answered the advert and got a phone call, nothing much happened but her name was kept on the books and she was asked to join WRVS. Mentions going to see the metropolitan organiser and helping with a luncheon club weekly. This went on for five-six months and CM was wondering if she wanted to carry on but then got a phone call to ask if she would help with ES, mentions the Hillsborough Disaster had just happened and the organiser had been very affected by this and CM was asked to help her. CM talks about the local office where she worked, how organised the building was, the departments and taking over training and events. CM talks about the volunteers who came from the hospitals and how some of them still volunteer with CM.</p> <p>[00:06:48] Before you joined in 1992 what did you know about WRVS? CM lived in London, Bradford, Sheffield and the first time came across WRVS was for antenatal care. Talks about getting a biscuit and cup of tea also the service from WRVS.</p>
[00:08:27]	<p>Luncheon Club</p> <p>Can you tell me more about your role in the Luncheon Club? Talks about becoming the deputy organiser after a few years, when she first started they used to make lunch in a church once a week for 60 elderly people. It took about seven hours a day, not much entertainment but people got a place to talk. CM also had a role in visiting other luncheon clubs in Sheffield. CM comments on some difficulties of the luncheon clubs.</p> <p>Can you tell me about the people who attended the club? Mostly elderly people and some with disabilities, some came by transport on a bus.</p>

[00:12:12]	<p>CM mentions they paid a small amount and seemed to look forward to attending.</p> <p>You have already mentioned that it was in a church, how would you describe the church where the club was? CM talks about it being dark inside the church, people were very happy to go and there was a 'lovely' atmosphere. Mentions the facilities in the club being very different from places they work in in emergencies.</p> <p>Who were the other volunteers who were working with you at the club? CM talks about volunteers who were just involved with the club and just wanted to do that sort of work.</p> <p>What sort of food were you serving at the Lunch Club? CM mentions it was basic, Casserole, meat, vegetables and it was budget orientated. People did not know what they were going to have till they arrived.</p>
[00:16:15]	<p>Deputy Emergency Services Organiser/Deputy Metropolitan Organiser</p> <p>CM talks about being Deputy ES Organiser and then becoming DMO but was a main manager for ES.</p> <p>She talks about children's holidays and filling in applications for funding probably from the lottery. Took 20 children away each year, at first locally in Derbyshire and then further afield. Camp was organised by a group from Chesterfield who looked after them for a week and WRVS dropped them off and picked them up.</p> <p>CM comments on the children being referred by social services and the places they visited to see if children were eligible to go. She talks about one visit where they went into a place in Sheffield five and there were four or five children and the farther would not agree to sending one of the children.</p> <p>How did you feel when they started cutting services like children's holidays? CM mentions feeling sad about it and felt children were missing out but from a business point of view you could see why they had to stop.</p>
[00:21:26]	<p>As a DMO you were involved with Hospitals as well ... CM talks about there being more services in more hospitals at the time and elderly care homes. Tried to continue the work of the previous organiser but then things were changing within WRVS.</p> <p>How did those changes affect your role? CM comments on how they did away with the role and split the services and this was when she transferred to ES and was based in Rotherham rather than Sheffield. CM mentions some of the difficulties and feelings about it moving but the university wanted to develop on the plot of land they had. WRVS did rethink the situation and the university gave them a small office to use but this was eventually given up.</p>
[00:25:20]	<p>Area and Regional Emergency Services Organiser</p>

	<p>How would you describe your role as an ES Area Organiser? CM says it was interesting as she took over South Yorkshire and gathered up volunteers from Rotherham, Doncaster, Barnsley and Sheffield. Talks about how Sheffield always had the most volunteers but Rotherham also had quite a few Hospital volunteers who joined but was not quite the same and had to work at getting volunteers in other areas. At that point had to recruit people through hospitals. CM comments on training and going to Easingwold.</p> <p>Can you tell me about any emergencies you helped with? CM talks about always being on the ES list for Sheffield and one of the call outs for Great Heck which was managed between three managers in the North East. CM went on the third day and it had been snowing. They had a tent at the incident to look after victims and other emergency services. On one day the roof of the tent started to cave in because of the snow and had to find petrol for the generator. The day CM came was when the relatives visited the crash site. Also attended a rail crash site in Leicestershire. Talks about the tent they had for the area and kept it at the fire station in Darlington. They would have liked a mobile unit but never managed to because of cost. In Barnsley WRVS catered for the Police fair on an annual basis with 20-25 volunteers. Also used to be involved with Sheffield Airport and Civil Aviation Exercises and Network Rail.</p>
[00:35:28]	<p>How did you feel when you were called out to an emergency? CM talks about being on a 24 hour call out and said that ‘you just used to do it’. Talks about being lucky in the training she had from Easingwold College. Mentions still having a box in the garage.</p> <p>What sort of things do you keep in that box? Basic items such as plastic cups, plates, serviettes, chopping boards, knives, cutlery, spare plastic dishes and occasionally dog food. CM talks about having to think about special requirements and paper work you might need. Talks about being able to assess the situation.</p>
[00:39:32]	<p>After being an area organiser you were promoted to being an Regional ES Manager ... CM talks about the role changing again taking on a region, regions were debatable as she took on East Midlands (Nottingham, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire) and kept South Yorkshire which is not part of the East Midlands and someone else took on the other part of the East Midlands. Mentions knowing what was happening in South Yorkshire, in Nottinghamshire but knew it was pretty good, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire was not sure about their work. Comments on first meeting in Lincolnshire and not many people turning up so trained people to be team leaders in the area and train other volunteers, ended up with 120 ES Volunteers in that area. Explains how Nottinghamshire would call them out but would not take on contracts with WRVS but provided good training events. Talks about Nottingham Hospital being very good as well for team leader meetings. Mentions keeping equipment at the fire stations, given a room at South Yorkshire Fire Station.</p>
[00:48:28]	<p>What sort of equipment did you have for emergency services?</p>

	<p>CM mentions team leaders having boxes as described earlier on, bigger equipment kept at fire stations included boilers and tea urns, equipment to take once situation had been assessed. Some training equipment was kept there.</p> <p>How would you describe the training that was given to volunteers? CM mentions Liz Redfern being the training manager, before then had training for volunteers was so they knew what to do, etiquettes of working with social services, basic equipment, be ready to call out, thought training was good and changed it if needs be.</p> <p>Did you find that changes to the organisation had an impact on ES? CM defiantly thought it had an impact, volunteers do not like change. Talks about visiting volunteers in the area to explain the changes. Hard to sell the ideas to volunteers.</p> <p>How did you feel about losing volunteers because of those changes? CM says it was a pity to lose volunteers, talks about having volunteers assist with catering on a Forrins walk and lost people who usually helped with that. CM felt she was always ok with them but sometimes felt she did not have a voice.</p>
[00:58:10]	<p>You've already mentioned the Sheffield Floods in 2007, where there any other emergencies that happened during your time as a regional manager? CM says there were quite a few different ones, the main ones were the floods, had 14 rest centres all over the region. CM talks about taking all the phone calls and not letting anybody down, set up a Humanitarian centre, continuously sending volunteers. At the same time CM was doing a course and lecturing at Easingwold for a week over three or four years. Comments on the Kosovan refugees coming to Yorkshire. CM talks about helping at exercises for civil aviation at Doncaster airport which finished in 2010. Mentions working with other groups such as the Red Cross and having a good presence when she did the regional job.</p>
[01:04:32]	<p>Do you find we still have that relationship with other organisations? CM says 'yes', talks about after restructure just working with ES in Sheffield, still meets people at meetings. Mentions hearing from the odd volunteer in Nottinghamshire that it has lost its presence.</p> <p>Have you attended any emergencies recently? CM talks about one 10 days before the interview, rest centre in King Edwards School, emergency of Suspicious package near West Bar. RVS provided welfare support. Had two very big exercises in March 2014 one with fire service, providing lunch for 400 people and another down at the town hall, which involved running a rest centre with friends and relatives been sent in the afternoon.</p>
[01:10:15]	<p>Do you find the exercises are very different from when you first started in WRVS? CM says she does not really know as exercises are never the same. Talks about some of the different exercises they have had but have not changed in the basics. Comments on having to adapt and gives the example of using an air base and having to clear the areas.</p>

[01:16:04]	<p>Also in 2012 you received an OBE for your ES work, how did you feel about that? CM talks about receiving her letter and reading that her name was being put forward for the award. Mentions not being able to tell anyone but told her husband so no one else knew till New Year's Eve.</p> <p>Have you received any other awards or recognition for your work? In 2007 CM was asked to go to the Albert Hall because of work during the floods. Talks about getting a Prime Minister's Award at Lancaster House, Gordon Brown attended, quite a lot of receptions at the time in appreciation of the work done during the floods. Comments on going to talks and saying that the recognition is really because of the team work of the volunteers.</p> <p>We've talked about some of the other restructures but have you been affected by the most recent one? CM says 'it's been different', talks about having call outs from the locality manager Carol. Comments on helping Area Manager put in a strategic bid for funding for health and the elderly. Mentions that it is getting harder and harder to maintain ES.</p>
[01:20:15]	<p>Conclusions</p> <p>In your opinion, since you started volunteering, what has been the biggest change to the organisation? CM mentions 'it went back' when she first started it was really ES, Hospitals and Community Services. Then ES started getting some money and help from hospitals but then it changed to being separate again and then went back to being linked. Mentions being told there would be more volunteers as they were being crossed over but CM does not think this actually happened. Talks about having different chief executives with their own plans. ES was quite professional as local authorities want volunteers to be trained and proper challenge than is offered by RVS.</p> <p>Where would you say RVS's place in society is today? CM says it seems to be well thought of and in a high place, talks about going to a board meeting in London and meeting people from outside who thought highly of RVS.</p> <p>What do you think is the future for RVS? CM thinks it will be making big bids for money to help working with the elderly. RVS need to think about the needs of the elderly and try to get money for it. CM talks about still having a contract with Sheffield and not renewed straight away as RVS don't seem interested in the smaller amounts of money anymore. Talks about the problems of having a lot more paid staff and the reaction of volunteers. Mentions sending out a letter to volunteers about a meeting in the Sheffield office and no one turned up.</p>
[01:32:50]	<p>Do you have any other memories or stories about your time with WRVS that you would like to share? 'I'd like to just say that I had a lot of really good people' mentions a volunteer in Nottingham helping her with admin and another volunteer who has been really</p>

[01:38:28]	<p>helpful in Sheffield. CM talks about soya boilers and going up to somewhere near Easingwold and being shown how to build trench cookers and cooking part of the meal. Talks about going to an education centre at Willow farm for 15 years.</p> <p>What is your most treasured memory of being with WRVS?</p> <p>CM says she has a lot of memories and lots of different things have happened. Says that she does not think that she would not have got an OBE without WRVS. Mentions Mark Leaver and how he started at a similar time worked his way through the ranks and saying working with different people over the years</p>
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