

# TRANSCRIPTS

HOW HAS THE WAY ROYAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE CARED FOR OLDER PEOPLE CHANGED OVER TIME?



ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

*Together for older people*

## CYRIL BARNES: MEALS-ON-WHEELS

---

### SLIDE 9

They were important because if it wasn't for WRVS at that time, and I say this strongly really, that if them people would have never had a meal they, the, the times was when you could go out and they used to have luncheon clubs and that but a lot of them couldn't get out. A lot of these elderly people couldn't get out and, and, as I say, if it wasn't for us, and I'm not bragging about anything that I've done or all that, them people wouldn't have survived. Mm, because there was nobody else at that time and, and I say that because there's still really... They didn't do, now they deliver the meals there now, but they, there isn't that personal touch, do you know what I mean? The, the, the meals go on and they put them on the, on the what's it and they're gone. It's not that personal touch that we used, used to have. I'd sit, I know I shouldn't do, but I used to go back and, and sit with them and talk to them for a little while. And, all them little things you could see a, you could see the difference in their faces. You know, that, a lot of times the, a lot of these people were very, very lonely. And, mm, if, if it wasn't for people like all these volunteers that do this job and all these different jobs, these elderly people I don't know what would happen to them really, you know. I mean, as I said, I'm, I'm still I, I still do a bit for Dementia and that but these elderly people that are sitting in these homes waiting. If they, if there wasn't a dinner, I mean if I'd never, I've, I've been out on jobs and, and a lot of people don't know this but I've been out and, and I've had, not had enough meals. And I personally gone to Safeway's or, in Melton, and bought a hot meal from Safeway's and took round because I didn't have enough meals. Mm, and they're the kind of touches I think is more, really, really important to these elderly, elderly people.

### SLIDE 10

It was a place for them to meet. Because most, in, especially in the valley areas the men would be working and the women would be at home, and we're going back a few years now, and so they were just going along to the clubs and having an afternoon of friendship. That has changed quite a lot. Unfortunately we don't get many men in the club, I think two clubs still have a few men, which is good, but majority now are women. But the thing is most young women now married, they've got children, they're working so the grandmother of the older age group who would be going to the clubs now has to look after the grandchildren so it has changed from that angle really. I think, I don't know how we get round to that, that's why just the age has changed and the younger people, the younger in their seventies...

Now are so busy looking after children. And most of them drive now whereas when I first moved to this area they didn't drive so really it's all changed. But it is important because they can chat to each other and they learn things.

### SLIDE 11

Well they had a section of the library in Poole which was called the Domiciliary Library, and they had a librarian who was in charge of that. And what would happen was the health visitors, or the doctor or relatives could get in touch with them and suggest people, or people themselves could get in touch with them, that they would like to have books. And she would visit them and she would actually take, you know, notes of what they liked, sit down and discuss the books with them. And then there was a lady called Peggy, I can't remember her surname, lovely lady, who was the WRVS Organiser in Poole for Books-on-Wheels, she organised the volunteers. And she would then say oh well, Mrs so and so at such and such wants whatever. And you'd go down to the Domiciliary Library. You'd ring the person you were going to visit and say 'Well, look I'm coming along with some books'. And you'd go to the Domiciliary Library and with this chart that they'd given you you'd pick out the books you think they wanted and then you would take them.

It was a once every, some did it three weeks, I think I did it four. And you'd go to their home and you would give them the books and then a month later you'd come back and change them. And what was lovely about it was the fact that I was doing the Branksome area of Poole which is very, very, very expensive. And one of my ladies, she used to wait at the kitchen window because she could see me come round in the car, and she'd wait at the kitchen window and she'd put the milk on for the coffee and then she'd totter through to the sitting room and by the time I'd got round it was all ready to go with the cups and everything. So I'd pour it all out and go in and we'd sit and it was a, it was lovely because you'd have a couple of hours there talking to them about the books and other things as well.

And what was interesting was that some of them would have a very strict, you know, 'I will read this and I will read this and I will read that'. And the ones they did love were the big picture books, particularly the Royal Family or whatever because they could put them on their laps. I mean a lot of them were very infirm and they could put them on their laps and sit and look at the pictures, you know.

And I found it very, very, mm, what shall I say? It was, it was, gave me a very good feeling and it gave them a good feeling. Because I felt I was doing something really that was appreciated, you know, appreciated and they liked. I don't want to say they feel, they felt grateful because that's awful, but the fact that I felt that I was providing another asset for them to enjoy. And I did enjoy doing books.

**[Interviewer]: And did you help the people who you delivered the books to in other ways apart from just giving them the books?**

Well this particular lady, yes, I did take her out on a couple of times. One of the days I'd got her a book a big, because we were getting through all these picture books, you know, and I'd brought one on fish, tropical fish. And she sat there and she started dabbing her eyes and I said 'What's the matter'? And she said 'Oh, my husband and I kept tropical fish'. And I had no idea, and Poole has got a lovely aquarium, and she'd got a wheelchair so I actually took her to Poole Aquarium and we all went round there. I think that was the only time I took her out because she was quite inform, but we certainly got off to Poole Aquarium the pair of us. I mean we had a drive round in the car getting there, I mean an awful long way to get to Poole Aquarium and coming back.

## ALISON FINDLAY: OLD PEOPLE'S WELFARE

---

### SLIDE 12 HOLIDAYS

We had caravans. I mean they only paid ten pounds for a week in the caravan. And we had one at, at Blair Atholl and one at Anstruther. And there was another one we managed which actually belonged to The Blind Society of Perth and it was at Blairgowrie. But I organised the let of that, and, and really from that then we, I discovered then that there were lots of people, quite, quite a number of folks who were on their own and who wanted to go to the caravan on their own, which I really didn't think was an option. I thought 'No, gas heaters and all sorts is not a good idea, an elderly person by themselves'. They, and no-one really to perhaps pay attention to what was going on.

So I asked Jenny Milne the, she was still the organiser at that time, if we could perhaps do something for these people, I wasn't just quite sure what. But Jenny was always open to suggestions, and I said 'Why can't we take them on holiday? We could perhaps take them on holiday.' But there were two, two centres, two Christian centres, one in The Borders and one in, up in Highland, Perthshire, that we decided that we could possibly take away a couple of car loads of folk. We, we got people through Social Work really, people that perhaps we could identify too from Meals-on-Wheels that perhaps we knew needed a break. one, one of the ladies we actually delivered Meals-on-Wheels to, poor, poor soul she was. And she hadn't been on holiday for seventy-four years, the last time she'd had a holiday she was ten. They, and that was, and she came from that area, which was a complete coincidence but she could tell us all about the area. And we had an old chap who had been obviously country born, born and bred, and there was a museum at Blair Atholl and he was able to tell us what all these old implements did. [Laughing] So it was a two way street, we could tell them some, some things but, and in the evening we played games and things with them and, you know, it was, it was a, a really, really smashing time.

### SLIDE 12 EMERGENCY SERVICES

We did two or three holidays with people who had been completely washed out in the 93 floods, which was dreadful. There was one lady in particular I went to, to interview before we took her on holiday and she said every night that it was, in the winter when it got dark and if it was snowy or if it was heavy rain she sat all night with her coat on and a suitcase. Now, I mean that was more than a year after the event. They, and while there were no deaths, there, there were very, very many people who were quite traumatised for, you know, a long time. And she had been in sort of pensioners houses, they were called at that time, and the flood water had been up to her ceiling there and she'd no upstairs so everything that had been in her home, photographs, memorabilia, what you and I would want to hang on to, they were all gone. And there were, were a number of people like that. And we took, took them off on holiday. They, and she, this particular woman that I've been telling you about she said that was the first time she'd slept all night. So it was beneficial. Mm, plus it put them into contact with other like-minded people. They, who had been through the same experience and that, that, I believe helps to get over an issue as well, if you speak to people who have, who have had the same problem.

### SLIDE 13

Someone knocked on the door and said they were from County Hall and they were interested in opening a luncheon club would the WRVS do it? So I said 'I'm sure they would'. So that was the most difficult bit I've ever done. I had to knock on doors of people in the village and ask them if they'd come if there was a luncheon club. Most of them said 'Yes', some of them were undecided so I left it and I said 'Well, I'll come back to you in a few days and see what you think'. ... We got up to about twenty-four, twenty-five people, which was very nice. And we had the local doctor upstairs so that if any of them weren't feeling too good, because apparently their blood pressure lowers when they've eaten and they can sort of not faint but... And I can remember going upstairs to the doctors, 'Can you help me'? And they came down. 'Oh', he said 'she's alright, it's because she's eaten, you know, the blood pressure's lowered'. So, well that was an interesting thing to remember, yes. So yes, we, I think we ran for quite a few years. In fact it's only about four or five years since it's finished but, you know, it was a good thing.

\*\*\*

The Books-on-Wheels finished, Meals-on-Wheels finished. Well the council wouldn't fund the Meals-on-Wheels anymore and the luncheon clubs they vanished as well because just one of those things, they wouldn't pay the rents, they wouldn't pay for the food. It was a shame really.

ROYAL  
VOLUNTARY  
SERVICE

*Together for older people*



**LOTTERY FUNDED**

Royal Voluntary Service is a registered charity with the charity number 1015988 & SC038924 and is a limited company registered in England and Wales with company number 2520413. Registered office Beck Court, Cardiff Gate Business Park, Cardiff CF23 8RP