

TRANSCRIPTS

WHAT IMPACT CAN VOLUNTEERING HAVE ON
PEOPLE'S LIVES?



ROYAL
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Together for older people

CYRIL BARNES

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All the elderly people, all, all, they're all elderly people that, it just, it's just another thing like Meals-on-Wheels, they, they still relied on their library books because sometimes I think some of them didn't read the library books sometimes. I don't, I don't know, I wouldn't like to say but some of them, I think what they, they liked about it, I could sit down in a chair and talk to them for a lot longer doing library books than I could doing the meals, because the meals would start to get cold. So that was another good thing about it, you could, and they'd tell you, oh, the stories I've heard, you know, it's with them. And, and that, that's, I, that's a good thing about it. That was a good, you know, they pour their heart out to you sometimes and they'd say, you know, different things, and that, that's another good thing about doing the library service, yes.

Most of them used to like love stories I think they used to... A lot of them though it was all ... And then you'd get one or two people who'd got murders and things like that but mostly they were love stories and, you know, but most of them was large print because they were all... Some, some, I used to take one or two out with the blind people, who were blind, and I used to take talking books out for them, yes. And, it, it was, there wasn't many, I don't think there was that many. Mm, I did use to take many men, out to many men, but most of the men that used to be either cowboys or it would be a murder, do you know what I mean?

But most of the women, you know, there'd always be, you know, all these love stories and that.

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Then I started to work in the clothing store and thoroughly enjoyed it, absolutely thoroughly enjoyed.

[Interviewer] Who would come into the clothing store?

[BS]: It, they were sent by Social Services, they had to have a need. And they would be supplied with up to three changes of clothing twice a year so they could come in the summer for summer clothes and then in the winter for their winter stuff. And everything was logged down in a book and, if they came back in between time and tried to swing the lead that they needed more because they hadn't got any, the ladies would go and produce the book and say 'Look, is that your signature? Because on the such and such a date you were given this, this, this, this, this and this, what have you done with it?' 'Ah, I, well it wore out' or well, and that was fair enough, that was fair comment. But if it was just that they'd sold it because they thought they'd get a couple of pennies for it, well no, they didn't get anything else. The ladies were quite strict like that, but you needed to be. And it was quite, quite sad to see some of the people that came in some days because one lady came in, no names obviously, but she'd, she'd been pregnant and she's got a maternity grant and she'd blown the lot on a pink baby dress because it was something she'd never had when she was a child, and she just loved this dress, and she blew the entire maternity grant and then she had a red headed boy. And poor lady, she came in and she said 'What am I going to do?' And they said 'Don't worry, don't worry, we'll sort you out'. And they gave a complete layette, so she had everything from nappies right the way through to vests and booties and, and, and little rompers, everything that the baby needed for a little boy. And it was so tragic to think that she'd, she'd been so much in need when she was a child that all she wanted was this dress for her child. Really, really sad. And yes, I used to go in there on a regular basis, well three times a week.

Some people you, you thought 'Well, why did you do it'? One of my relatives was quite high up in Social Services elsewhere and he said he loved WRVS, absolutely loved WRVS clothing stores because their staff were being asked for money and they knew it wasn't being spent on what it was being asked for whereas they could give them a letter for our clothing store and we would make sure that they actually got what they are supposed to need. And that they could use it that way. He, he couldn't sing their praises high enough. So it was a much needed facility at the time.

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We had a number of people who came on a regular basis with the entire family in the spring and the autumn and got them all kitted out. Because I don't think that they had to have any authorisation from Social Services to come, I think they could come entirely un-recommended. But we had a Clothing Department when I was on the Wirral and it wasn't our, it wasn't our office but in the Chester office which also had a Clothing Department. They had a number of quite upmarket people who brought their very nice clothes in. And one lady brought in a very nice designer outfit and the Clothing Organiser at the time decided that really it was a waste and she took it to a shop which recycled clothes. ... you could take good quality clothes and they would pay you for them and then they resold them. And so she, they took this outfit to this shop, whatever it was, and got, with the money that they got... I mean there was nothing underhand about it at all it was a regular practice. With the money that they got they bought underwear and things which they never had enough of for their clients. But the designer clothing place decided that it was a very nice, it was, it was a very expensive outfit so they put it in their window and sadly the lady who had given it came past and saw it in their window and knew that she'd given it to WRVS and made the most almighty stink about it. And although there really wasn't anything wrong we were warned that this was not a good idea and we just needed to be a bit more careful.

MARGARET MILLER: FUNDRAISING

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[MM]: Jean was in a warehouse one night and the manager of the warehouse came to her and said 'Why are you buying all this stuff, are you interested in buying some other stuff that's in the warehouse'? She said 'No I'm not, but my mother might be'. He said 'Well tell her to come on Thursday night and speak to me'. So I went and he'd put his things in one of those big trolleys that they use in warehouses was conveying their goods and I'm saying to myself 'Well, I can't pay this out of my ordinary account I've not as much money as pay this I don't know what's to happen'. So when the trolley was absolutely full he took me to the pay out place, I said, he's adding it all through and all through and I said 'My bank account's not going to make, meet this cheque'. 'It's yours,' I never paid a ha'penny, and that was practically the whole of the sale of work for Christmas. We used to have a sale of work once a year. And the neighbours got to know, Jean worked on all the lightly broken stuff that came in and learnt how to sew them and how to do a whole lot of other things and the goods were perfect by the time I was selling them again. So that was what helped the Harmony Club and also what gave us some money to work on.

[interviewer]: What did you do with the money that you raised for the club?

[MM]: I used it for the club members, I took them out in the summertime for a summer outing and I took them out at Christmas for their Christmas dinner and they never had to pay for anything.

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