

**IVR 'Back to Basics' Working Paper  
Series: Paper Two**

**Towards a new understanding  
of volunteering in England  
before 1960?**

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## About this working paper

Since its formation in 1997 the Institute for Volunteering Research (IVR) has undertaken hundreds of pieces of work researching all aspects of volunteering. These commonly take the form of evaluations and impact assessments completed on behalf of volunteer-involving organisations. Too often, however, much of the learning can be confined to that individual project and organisation. We wanted to look again at what we have learnt across all of our work, bringing together the knowledge cumulatively to help answer some of the basic questions facing volunteering. We are seeking to do this through our working paper series.

The first paper in the series, *'A rose by any other name. Revisiting the "what exactly is volunteering" question'* was published in 2011 and explores the definition of volunteering and the implications for policy, practice and research. In this second paper, we explore the history of volunteering before the 1960s; an era which is frequently taken to be the start of the modern volunteering movement.

This paper has been developed with the advice and support of Professor Nicholas Deakin. A version of it was presented as part of a panel on 'Challenging narratives: Towards an understanding of the history of volunteering' at the NCVO-VSSN Researching the Voluntary Sector Conference, 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

## Introduction

In his recently published two-volume contribution to the Oxford History of England, historian Brian Harrison identifies 'the vitality of voluntarism' as one of five major themes cutting across his account of post-war history.<sup>1</sup> So why does a dominant version of the history of volunteering suggest that volunteering reached a low ebb during the years after 1945 until a so-called 'volunteer boom' in the 1960s: a rediscovery of volunteering to sit alongside the better known 'rediscovery of poverty'? Tim Dartington coined the phrase 'volunteer boom' in his 1971 account of youth volunteering organisation Task Force, but it was popularised in several articles

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Harrison, *Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom 1951-1970* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), xx.

and pamphlets by Jos Sheard in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>2</sup> Sheard argued that in the period immediately after the Second World War volunteers were sidelined from the roles they had previously held in welfare services as the National Health Service and local authorities expanded provision.<sup>3</sup> Many scholars have recognised the role of voluntary organisations in pioneering services and activities which were later taken over by local government and the state, without acknowledging the continued place of volunteers in delivering, managing and modifying such services. Such a view was encapsulated in the 1978 report of the Wolfenden Committee on voluntary organisations which considered the voluntary sector 'to have been marking time' in the immediate post-war years.<sup>4</sup> Meta Zimmeck also takes the 1960s as her starting point in a recent book chapter on the history of government and volunteering, suggesting that with the 'glory days of the welfare state' over, government turned to volunteers to help fill the cracks.<sup>5</sup> Historian of voluntary action Frank Prochaska sees the collapse of volunteer visiting societies after the war as a significant feature of his account of the death of voluntarism in post-war Britain.<sup>6</sup>

However this prevailing view has recently begun to be challenged by academics writing on modern social and political history. Few historians of voluntary action would agree with Prochaska's declinist vision, as the essays collected in the 2011 book *Ages of Voluntarism* make clear. In that volume Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith suggest that the history of voluntary action has been shaped by those, on both left and right, anxious to sustain the 'myth' of the Labour Party's hostility to voluntary action.<sup>7</sup> From the 1970s onwards, they argue, 'numerous rightwing commentators have sought to portray the period following the end of the Second World War as one characterised by the growth of a monolithic state and the

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<sup>2</sup> Tim Dartington, *Task Force* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1971), 9; Jos Sheard, 'Volunteering and Society, 1960-1990' in *Volunteering and Society: Principles and Practices* ed., Rodney Hedley and Justin Davis Smith (London: NCVO, 1992), 11-32; Jos Sheard, 'From Lady Bountiful to Active Citizen' in *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector*, ed., Justin Davis Smith, Colin Rochester and Rodney Hedley (London: Routledge, 1995), 114-27.

<sup>3</sup> Sheard, 'Volunteering and Society', 11.

<sup>4</sup> *The Future of Voluntary Organisations: Report of the Wolfenden Committee* (London: Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust and Carnegie UK Trust, 1978), 20.

<sup>5</sup> Meta Zimmeck, 'Government and Volunteering: Towards a History of Policy and Practice', in *Volunteering and Society in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, ed., Colin Rochester, Angela Ellis Paine, Steven Howlett with Meta Zimmeck (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 84-102.

<sup>6</sup> Frank Prochaska, *Christianity and Social Service in Modern Britain* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 97.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Deakin and Justin Davis Smith, 'Labour, Charity and Voluntary Action: The Myth of Hostility' in *The Ages of Voluntarism: How we got to the Big Society*, ed. Matthew Hilton and James McKay (Oxford: Oxford University Press for British Academy, 2011), 69-93.

consequent emasculation of voluntary action'.<sup>8</sup> James McKay and Matthew Hilton argue for the study of what they call NGOs (non-governmental organisations) and the volunteers and activists these organisations involved to be taken more seriously by historians of recent British politics.<sup>9</sup> Hilton and McKay's thesis is that the British voluntary sector has survived through 'constant renewal and adaptation' and is today marked by new forms of proxy participation as well as continued openings for direct activity in volunteering, lobbying and campaigning.<sup>10</sup>

Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely argue in a book on recipients of charity that 'too many studies in the past have taken an institutional stance, concentrating on the benefactors and officials who were responsible for implementing policies'.<sup>11</sup> In fact the prevailing trend in the historiography of voluntarism has been to sideline the histories of ordinary volunteers as much as the recipients of voluntary aid. In part this is a problem of sources; the voices of individual volunteers are often lost in the annual reports, publications and minutes through which scholars generally approach the history of voluntary action. Many groups which involved volunteers were locally organised, left few written records and made little visible impact on public policy, while scholars seemingly have not thought to look for information on past volunteering in studies of local government or the growth of public administration. In addition the terminology used by previous generations to describe 'honorary workers' or 'social servants' may be confusing for a modern audience.

Recent studies are starting to build up a picture of a more diverse, dynamic volunteering movement in England than has been previously recognised. Yet too many accounts still conflate 'volunteering' with the work of voluntary organisations more broadly, and do not adequately consider the role of volunteers within state or local government services. A second area of neglect is the contribution of volunteers to the field of leisure, which Colin Rochester and Meta Zimmeck have recently

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> James McKay and Matthew Hilton, 'Introduction', *NGOs in Contemporary Britain: Non-state Actors in Society and Politics since 1945*, ed. Nick Crowson, Matthew Hilton and James McKay (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Hilton and James McKay, 'An Introduction', in *Ages of Voluntarism*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Borsay and Peter Shapely, *Medicine, Charity and Mutual Aid: The Consumption of Health and Welfare in Britain, c.1550-1950* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 1.

argued forms a 'new frontier' for voluntary action history.<sup>12</sup> In this exploratory working paper, I want to suggest a number of arguments against the prevailing view that volunteering was 'reborn' in the 1960s after reaching a low ebb in the post-war period. I will argue for the existence of a 'volunteering movement' prior to 1960, show that expansion of state welfare provision from the early twentieth century through until 1960s relied on the involvement of volunteers and discuss important changes to volunteering in the immediate post-war period.

### **The existence of a 'volunteering movement' prior to 1960**

Jos Sheard argued that a 'volunteering movement' started in the 1960s, when changes occurred which made it possible to speak of 'volunteering' as a phenomenon in its own right as distinct from the voluntary sector.<sup>13</sup> I believe this is a misreading of pre-war developments that may also be linked to a tendency of successive generations to feel that they are rediscovering or reinventing volunteering anew. Sheard and others refer to the 'ladies bountiful' of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century without acknowledging that important changes in voluntary social service were in fact occurring in this period. Indeed the 1880s were retrospectively identified by Clement Attlee as beginning a 'new era in social service'.<sup>14</sup> The new era was set apart from earlier periods by a preponderance of associations which placed the encouragement of volunteering at the heart of their work. Thus in addition to the continuation of individual and family acts of charity, the period saw the emergence of organised voluntary service channelled through a number of guilds or leagues. For instance, from the early twentieth century, groups like the Student Christian Movement and denominational social service unions championed volunteering among their own constituencies. Moreover, voluntary social service was seen as constructive use of leisure time and as such strongly encouraged by those concerned about potentially problematic categories of young people, including unmarried white-collar workers and middle-class women aged 18-30, the so-called 'girls of leisure'. Social service was widely believed to offer opportunities for personal development and fulfilment. Thus a number of groups, structured to reflect late Victorian and Edwardian divisions of class

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<sup>12</sup> Colin Rochester and Meta Zimmeck, 'Recreation and Leisure: A New Frontier in the History of Voluntary Action?', Voluntary Action History Society Blog (15 October 2012). Online at <http://www.vaahs.org.uk/2012/10/leisure-rochester-zimmeck>, accessed 31 October 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Jos Sheard, *The Politics of Volunteering* (London: ADVANCE, 1986), 11.

<sup>14</sup> C. R. Attlee, *The Social Worker* (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1920), 187.

and gender, emerged to draw youth into service for others. For example social service was presented as a way for lower-middle-class young men to avoid the temptations and vices of city life. However it was recognised that taking up some definite volunteering might be harder for those 'do not happen to move in circles where social service is a familiar habit'.<sup>15</sup>

I have written elsewhere about this pre-1914 proliferation of volunteering leagues for young people – including the Girls' Diocesan Association, the Cavendish Association, Agenda Club, Time and Talents and the Girl's Realm Guild – which today are largely forgotten.<sup>16</sup> The historiography of youth work or informal education has tended to focus on service *for* young people rather than *by* young people. This is in part because such writers begin from the standpoint of youth or community practitioners concerned to document the pre-history of the Youth Service (1939), and in so doing focus almost exclusively on working-class youth as the recipients of philanthropic or statutory services.<sup>17</sup> For example, historians of youth and education have well documented the development of boys' and girls' clubs and uniformed brigades for young people from the 1880s.<sup>18</sup> However, these associations were also important in providing new opportunities for the tens of thousands of people who volunteered as brigade officers, club leaders and instructors.<sup>19</sup> Indeed Scottish educationalist and evangelist Henry Drummond (1851-1897) considered that 'the Boys' Brigade would have been worth starting were it only for the sake of the young men who act as its officers'.<sup>20</sup> All these associations strongly encouraged voluntary service as a citizen's duty.<sup>21</sup> An early article on the Guild of Help movement, for instance, summed up this view: 'personal service and not almsgiving is the highest

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<sup>15</sup> *Young Man*, June 1912, 182.

<sup>16</sup> Georgina Brewis, 'From working parties to social work: Middle-class girls' education and social service 1890-1914', *History of Education* 38, no. 6 (November 2009): 761-777.

<sup>17</sup> Ruth Gilchrist, Tony Jeffs and Jean Spence eds., *Essays in the History of Community and Youth Work* (Leicester: Youth Work Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> John Springhall, *Sure and Stedfast: A History of the Boys' Brigade 1883-1983* (London: Collins, 1983); Harry Hendrick, *Images of Youth: Age, Class and the Male Youth Problem, 1880-1920* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Anthony J. Jeffs, *Young People and the Youth Service* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 16.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Springhall, *Sure and Stedfast*, 42.

<sup>21</sup> Rebecca West, 'The Personal Service Association: Work for Idle Hands to Do. The Clarion, 13 December 1912', reprinted in *The Young Rebecca: Writings of Rebecca West 1911-17*, ed. Jane Marcus (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982), 127-130.

form of charity'.<sup>22</sup> The myriad of service leagues and guilds suggests that movements such as the Guilds of Help, described by Michael Moore as 'uniquely successful' in enrolling large numbers of volunteers, were in fact more typical of the period than Moore argues.<sup>23</sup>

This early volunteering or 'social service' movement was marked by the formation of organisations which sought to recruit and support volunteers. It was also a period of increased attention being given to volunteer training and what was then known as 'social study'. Educationalist Mary Stocks (1891-1975) later wrote of 'the exhilaration of these Edwardian years in the field of social service'.<sup>24</sup> Several of the young people's service leagues emerged as leaders in the field of training for part-time volunteers.<sup>25</sup> Groups ran annual conferences, arranged lectures, summer schools and visits for volunteers to social institutions and prepared reading lists and study courses. Social study circles were eventually adopted by a very wide range of leagues and associations.<sup>26</sup> University settlements in the major cities developed dual roles as philanthropic institutions and educational centres for volunteers, receiving a steady stream of visitors and short-term residents keen to learn about social problems and gain practical experience of social service. Moreover, well before the emergence of local volunteer bureaux in the 1960s or the establishment of the national Volunteer Centre in 1973, a number of infrastructure bodies existed to support voluntary service, including local councils of social service or social welfare. In 1904 the British Institute of Social Service was formed as a central bureau of information on social service. Although it is today remembered only as one of several forerunners of the National Council of Social Service (NCSS), founded in 1919, in its heyday it was an important institution which reflected the centrality of social service to pre-war social, political and religious thought. The expansion of

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<sup>22</sup> 'The Larger Work of the Guild of Help', *Progress* 3, no. 2 (April 1908): 103.

<sup>23</sup> Michael J. Moore, 'Social Work and Social Welfare: The Organisation of Philanthropic Resources in Britain 1900-1914', *Journal of British Studies* 14 (1977): 93-4; 'The Guild of Help Movement', *Progress* 15 (July 1909): 189-90.

<sup>24</sup> M. D. Stocks, *Fifty Years in Every Street: The Story of the Manchester University Settlement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1945), 24.

<sup>25</sup> J. St. G. Heath, 'Training Courses for Social Work', *Progress*, 7 no. 2 (April 1912): 90; *GDA Leaflet*, July 1910, 13; *NUWW Handbook* 1910-11, 90.

<sup>26</sup> *NUWW Handbook*, 1911-12, 94; *GDA Leaflet*, January 1910, 11; *GDA Leaflet*, October 1912, 45; *What to Read on Social Subjects* (London: Hampstead Council of Social Welfare, 1914); Hardy, *St Paul's Girls School Book*; *Hilda Cashmore 1876-1943* (Gloucester: Privately printed, 1944), 15-20; *Women Workers Oxford Conference 1912*, 164-7.

state welfare opened up new opportunities for volunteers 'in connection with the parish, the municipality and the state', as discussed below.<sup>27</sup>

Other commentators have claimed that the inter-war period was also highly significant in the development of a social service or volunteering movement. Peter Grant has shown that home front volunteering during the First World War was an important, though neglected, phenomenon - with around 2 million people giving time to help wartime charities, a figure that compares favourably with the 2.6 million men who volunteered to join forces.<sup>28</sup> A 1952 report on voluntary service and the state commissioned by NCSS and the King Edward's Hospital Fund for London considered that the First World War marked a 'turning point' in the history of volunteering and judged that in the inter-war period 'voluntary service had ceased to be charity or patronage and had become personal service by people from all walks of society.'<sup>29</sup> While such claims that volunteering was no longer a preserve of the middle and upper classes may be questionable, in the 1930s calls for personal service were undoubtedly made to a broader section of society than previously. Despite the expansion of state welfare services to deal with the effects of high unemployment during the 1930s Depression, services were subject to considerable limitations and government came to rely heavily on voluntary effort.<sup>30</sup> This further strengthened the 'unique partnership' between state and voluntary action that Elizabeth Macadam (1871-1948) identified as the 'new philanthropy'. As I have argued elsewhere, in addition to appeals for financial aid there was also a new call for volunteers that is crucial to understanding the voluntary response to the unemployment crisis.<sup>31</sup> The NCSS enlisted its Patron, the Prince of Wales, to launch a campaign for 'the youth of the nation to take up social service' for the unemployed with a broadcast appeal from the Albert Hall in January 1932.<sup>32</sup> This appeal resulted

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<sup>27</sup> *NUWW Handbook 1911-12*, 98; Michael J. Moore, 'Social Service and Social Legislation in Edwardian England: The Beginning of a New Role for Philanthropy', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1971): 33-43.

<sup>28</sup> Peter Grant, 'Voluntarism and the impact of the First World War', in *Ages of Voluntarism*, 27-46.

<sup>29</sup> *Voluntary Service and the State: A Study of the Needs of the Hospital Service* (London: NCSS and King Edward's Hospital Fund for London, 1952), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Bernard Harris, 'Responding to Adversity: Government-Charity Relations and the Relief of Unemployment in Inter-War Britain', *Contemporary Record* 9, no. 3 (Winter 1995): 529-61, at 532.

<sup>31</sup> Georgina Brewis, *A Social History of Student Volunteering: Britain and Beyond, 1880-1980* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, Forthcoming 2014).

<sup>32</sup> 'Youth and Social Service: The Prince of Wales's Message', *The Times*, 28 January 1932, 12; 'Opportunities for Service', NCSS leaflet issued 1932 [SCM archive, Birmingham University].

in the launching of hundreds of new schemes for the unemployed, including clubs and centres. A. D. Lindsay (1879-1952), Master of Balliol and a Vice President of NCSS, argued that 'voluntary service from those who are not unemployed must play the mediating part between the Government and the unemployed'.<sup>33</sup> Writing in 1955 Mary Morris also felt that the inter-war period had been significant in the development of a volunteering movement, noting 'from small beginnings the social service movement swept over the country'.<sup>34</sup>

### **Volunteers and the growth of the welfare state**

The prevailing view of the history of volunteering outlined above tends to ignore the role played by volunteers in the extension of social welfare services in the 1940s and 1950s. While such writers may be aware of the developments in the first half of the century which had resulted in what Macadam called 'a system of combined statutory and voluntary social service. . . which is quite unrivalled elsewhere', there seems to be a tendency to consider that such developments ended with the Second World War.<sup>35</sup> Such accounts see the 1969 Aves Report as the first to consider the role of volunteers in modern welfare services, ignoring earlier studies such as the committee on voluntary service and the NHS which reported in 1952.<sup>36</sup> However, as Mary Morris argued in her 1955 book on voluntary organisations, 'the use of voluntary workers in services for which the State is responsible is as old as the unpaid magistracy, and as new as the use of voluntary workers on regional boards and management committees for the administration of the nationalised hospitals.'<sup>37</sup> In fact the 1940s and 1950s were marked by continued debate about the nature and extent of the voluntary social service movement and its future role in England - played out in journals such as the NCSS organ *Social Service*. In fact the evidence suggests that volunteering was central to the growth of the welfare state in the 1940s and 1950s, involving more rather than fewer volunteers than pre-war.

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<sup>33</sup> A. D. Lindsay, 'Unemployment the "Meanwhile" Problem,' *Contemporary Review*, 163 (Jan-Jun 1933), 687-95, at 694.

<sup>34</sup> Mary Morris, *Voluntary Organisations and Social Progress* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955), 182.

<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Macadam, *The New Philanthropy: A Study of the Relations between the Statutory and Voluntary Social Services* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1934), 285.

<sup>36</sup> *Voluntary Service and the State*.

<sup>37</sup> Morris, *Voluntary Organisations*, 182.

There is a distinct trend that times of great statutory expansion of services will also be accompanied by a stimulus of auxiliary voluntary service. Thus, before discussing the post-war developments in more detail, it is worth noting that expansion of state welfare provision in the Edwardian period also created more rather than fewer opportunities for volunteers. Volunteers and voluntary organisations were involved in the administration of almost all the new legislation, a partnership with government and local authorities welcomed by many involved in social service.<sup>38</sup> Although some social workers, mainly associated with the Charity Organisation Society, protested against the extension of state welfare, such views were increasingly held to represent the attitudes of a previous generation.<sup>39</sup> A range of new associations that developed to channel these volunteers were committed to working closely with the state, including the Guilds of Help, Councils of Social Welfare and the Personal Service Association as well as the many young people's service leagues mentioned above. Contemporary commentators wrote approvingly of the 'insistent call for social servants' in this period.<sup>40</sup> One influential model was the School Care Service of the London County Council, which in 1907 set up a system of Children's Care Committees for London elementary schools on a model pioneered by school manager Margaret Frere.<sup>41</sup> The Children's Care Committees were staffed by women volunteers supported by paid organisers and opened an 'enormous field for personal social work': 5,000 volunteers came forward to serve on the London committees while Birmingham's committees counted 1,600 volunteers.<sup>42</sup> Volunteers were also recruited to serve on patient after care committees and in burgeoning maternal and child welfare services.<sup>43</sup> By 1910 there were 2,000 volunteer health visitors working under the Public Health authorities in towns across England and Wales. Such committees provided openings for what was described as 'a new order of people', unpaid volunteers with specialist knowledge and expertise.<sup>44</sup> Research

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<sup>38</sup> *Adult School Social Service Handbook*, 12; Samuel E. Keeble, 'The Future of Social Service' in *The Social Outlook* (London: Robert Culley, 1910), 197.

<sup>39</sup> Stefan Collini, 'Hobhouse, Bosanquet and the State: Philosophical Idealism and Political Argument in England 1880-1918', *Past and Present* 72 (1976): 87.

<sup>40</sup> Cecile Matheson, 'Opportunities for Training for Personal Service' in *Women Workers: The Papers read at the Conference held in Oxford 1912* (London: NUWW, 1912), 52.

<sup>41</sup> A. Susan Williams, Patrick Ivin and Caroline Morse, *The Children of London: Attendance and Welfare at School 1870-1990* (London: Institute of Education, 2001), 41.

<sup>42</sup> Moore, 'Social Service and Social Legislation', 38; *Adult School Social Service Handbook*, 54.

<sup>43</sup> H. L. Woolcombe, 'Development of Personal Service', in *Conference on War Relief and Personal Service* (London: Longman's Green and Co., 1915), 142; Matheson, 'Opportunities for Training', 52.

<sup>44</sup> W. J. Ashley, *On Social Study* (Reprinted from the Year-Book of Social Progress, 1912).

into children's Care Committees in the 1920s showed that around a third of local authorities in England responding to a survey made some form of provision for children's care committees.<sup>45</sup> However, the extension of such schemes was routinely hampered by widespread and ongoing uncertainty as to the relationship between voluntary help and public provision which was said to 'run through the whole field of public administration' in the inter-war period.<sup>46</sup> This uncertainty was to resurface in the post-war welfare state.

In 1945 many groups and individuals were understandably anxious about the intentions of the new Labour government towards voluntary organisations, but it was widely believed that the expansion of state welfare would leave some role for volunteering and for voluntary organisations.<sup>47</sup> Unsurprisingly, the topic was the subject of extensive debate at post-war conferences and meetings of voluntary agencies, where politicians and voluntary sector leaders' speeches were countered by the local experiences of volunteers. Indeed positive hopes about the continued role for charity were expressed in a number of reports and politicians' speeches at the time, and confirmed when support for voluntary organisations was incorporated into the new welfare legislation, such as the 1948 National Assistance Act.<sup>48</sup> Lord Beveridge famously wrote of the 'moving frontier' between state and voluntary provision in his 1948 report *Voluntary Action*. However, this was not just a debate about voluntary organisations and their role in the welfare state but also about the changing status of voluntary workers and the place of volunteers in the state-run welfare services.<sup>49</sup>

Voluntary sector leaders were loud in proclaiming the continued need for volunteer workers in the welfare state, particularly in visiting and other services for those in hospital and domiciliary services for old and sick people. Speaking at a 1947 conference organised by the National Old People's Welfare Council, even the left-

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<sup>45</sup> John H. Nicholson, *School Care Committees* (London: P. S. King and Son, 1925).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>47</sup> Nicholas Deakin, 'The Perils of Partnership: The Voluntary Sector and the State', in *An Introduction to the Voluntary Sector*, ed. Justin Davis Smith, Colin Rochester and Rodney Hedley, 40-65 (London: Routledge, 1995).

<sup>48</sup> See A. F. C. Beveridge; Henry A. Mess 'What is Voluntary Social Service?' in *Voluntary Social Services since 1918* (London: Kegan Paul, 1948)

<sup>49</sup> 'Editorial', *Social Service*, 24, no. 2 (Sept-No, 1952): 50-51.

wing Health Minister Aneurin Bevan (1897-1960) argued that while the state must undertake work of welfare 'organisation' and provide 'machinery' for voluntary work, there remained a need for the efforts of the volunteer.<sup>50</sup> A 1949 House of Lords debate on Beveridge's *Voluntary Action* report, recognised that the work of voluntary organisations was sustained by 'a small number of paid officers, but mainly by a great multitude of unpaid workers who during their leisure hours are willing to give time and effort to the service of these movements.'<sup>51</sup> Several of the contributors welcomed the role of volunteers in health services. For example, speaking on behalf of the Government, Lord Pakenham pointed out:

It is quite wrong to assume that nationalisation of any social service excludes the volunteer. I do not think that anyone has made that mistake this afternoon, but it is sometimes made outside. I would give the House the example of the wealth of voluntary service which is being placed at the disposal of the National Health scheme, where no fewer than 10,000 men and women are serving without payment on the regional hospital boards and on the hospital management committees.<sup>52</sup>

It would be incorrect to say that the formation of state welfare services in the immediate post war years did not cause some consternation and misapprehension among groups that existed to promote volunteering and social service. There was widespread confusion as new opportunities were at first not fully understood.<sup>53</sup> There were particular concerns about what forms of volunteering would prove to be of interest to the post-war generation of young working people and university students. For example, a meeting held in 1948 to decide how to allocate the balance of pre-war funds of the Cambridge Universities Camps for the Unemployed - which had emerged as a student response to the Depression - concluded 'no form of social service in England now appealed to undergraduates in the way unemployed camps appealed to them before the war'.<sup>54</sup> Pronouncements on the death of domestic student voluntarism proved premature however. It was in the 1950s that students

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<sup>50</sup> *Working together for Old People's Welfare* (London: NCSS, 1948), 8.

<sup>51</sup> Viscount Samuel, House of Lords Debate Hansard, *HL Deb 22 June 1949 vol 163 cc75-136*

<sup>52</sup> Lord Pakenham, House of Lords Debate Hansard, *HL Deb 22 June 1949 vol 163 cc75-136*

<sup>53</sup> Morris, *Voluntary Organisations*, 187.

<sup>54</sup> 'Minutes of a meeting held on 4 February 1948', Cambridge Committee Minutes, 1938-1950, CU Min IX 69 6, Cambridge University Archives.

began to form new university social service leagues, aimed at better coordinating student volunteering. Likewise, at the end of the war, many members of the Women's Voluntary Service resigned, expecting the organisations to close down, only to see it re-emerge as a 200,000 strong social service organisation by 1950 after concerted lobbying by its head Lady Reading.<sup>55</sup>

In the late 1940s Home Office civil servants debating the future of the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) proposed a fusion of NCSS and WVS to create an infrastructure body for the voluntary sector which would recruit volunteers directly and coordinate volunteer work for statutory services.<sup>56</sup> Such a scheme did not come to fruition, but the proposal is evidence of creative thinking on how to involve volunteers in welfare state services. Thus a more complex picture of volunteer contributions to the early welfare state emerges from revisiting the available evidence. In the post-war period volunteers were deployed both directly by statutory agencies and indirectly in statutory settings such as hospitals in partnership with voluntary organisations. Although commentators have tended to dismiss as insignificant the role of volunteers in post-war statutory services, there is evidence that this was both more widespread and more varied than previously thought. Indeed, volunteers were involved in many state services including the health services, Youth Service and War Pensions service. For instance, in 1956 there were 5,000 volunteers working on 156 War Pensions committees assisting the government War Pensions Welfare Service.<sup>57</sup> From 1944 voluntary organisations were full partners in the Youth Service, and most youth clubs and groups relied wholly or largely on volunteer leaders. After the war, local authorities continued to establish new youth clubs with both paid and volunteer staff. In 1947 the National Association for Maternity and Child Welfare undertook a survey of the work of volunteers in local authority run child welfare centres, finding that while not all councils used volunteers, a majority did value volunteers in helping organise clinical and clerical work as well as for such tasks as weighing babies.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Hinton, *Women*.

<sup>56</sup> Hinton, *Women*, 218-9.

<sup>57</sup> Richard Wood, 'To Restore them to themselves', *The Rotarian*, May 1956.

<sup>58</sup> Madeline Roof, *Voluntary Societies and Social Policy* (London: Routledge, 1957), 71.

The war had greatly reduced the numbers of London Care Committee volunteers - from around 5,000 in 1939 to 437 by 1941 - but a post-war recruitment campaign meant numbers grew back up to 2,500 by 1958.<sup>59</sup> A 1950 report of the LCC's Education Committee signalled the continued need for volunteers.<sup>60</sup> With the new provisions of the welfare state volunteers' work was of course evolving - for example it was no longer necessary to make assessments for milk or assess charges for medical treatment - but volunteers continued to visit families, attend school medicals and support school leavers to find work or training.<sup>61</sup> The main work of such volunteers gradually shifted to 'problem children' and children with special health needs such as speech therapy. Joan Whidborne, a care committee volunteer at the time, reflected:

Here is a perfect example of state and voluntary service working hand in hand. The voluntary workers on their own school committees take full responsibility, and are free to devote just as much time to an individual family as is required, without having to produce statistical results or sign a time sheet.<sup>62</sup>

An important area of work for volunteers was in hospitals and other health services, and their continued involvement in state-run health services was a topic that generated much debate in the late 1940s and early 1950s.<sup>63</sup> In 1948, when the NHS Act came into operation, some hospital voluntary service leagues disbanded.<sup>64</sup> However the 1952 report on voluntary service and the state commissioned by NCSS and the King Edward's Hospital Fund judged 'although there is a national health service financed almost entirely from public funds, there is more voluntary service given to the sick and infirm than ever before.'<sup>65</sup> The report revealed that volunteers were involved in a very wide range of roles in former voluntary hospitals and were

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<sup>59</sup> Williams et al, *Children of London*, 100;

<sup>60</sup> J. Whidborne, 'The Children's (School) Care Committees', *Social Service*, 25, no. 1 (June - August 1951), 20-24.

<sup>61</sup> Phyllis Willmott, 'London's School Care Committee Service 1908-1989', *Voluntary Action* 6, no. 2 (2004): 106.

<sup>62</sup> Whidborne, 'Children's (School) Care Committees', 22.

<sup>63</sup> John Dodd, 'State Hospitals and Voluntary Effort', 24, no. 2 (September-November 1950), 75-9; *Voluntary Service and the State*.

<sup>64</sup> *Voluntary Service and the State*, 71.

<sup>65</sup> *Voluntary Service and the State*, 71.

also starting to be deployed in the long-stay municipal hospitals and mental hospitals that had no tradition of involving volunteers.<sup>66</sup> Volunteers served as auxiliary nurses helping to lift and wash patients and as ward orderlies responsible for tasks such as preparing bandages, serving meals, repairing linen and administration. Others visited patients, drove patients to and from hospital, offered advice, ran libraries and trolley shops, operated canteens, arranged entertainments and Christmas parties. In some parts of the country volunteers were also being involved in new ways to improve patients' experiences and raise standards in long-stay hospitals and geriatric wards as well as in a limited number of mental hospitals. In a 1957 book Madeline Rooff summed up the 'new voluntary activities' of the post-war years, including hospital trolley services, convalescent homes and canteens run by WVS and Red Cross volunteers.<sup>67</sup> However the 1952 NCSS inquiry also highlighted a number of challenges with further involvement of volunteers such as reticence and lack of awareness of voluntary organisations among paid staff and perceptions of volunteer unreliability and unpunctuality.<sup>68</sup>

One of the most interesting aspects of twentieth century volunteering history is the evolution of war-time models of voluntary action to a peacetime setting. Notable here is the work of Citizens Advice Bureaux after 1939 and the Women's Voluntary Service from 1938. The WVS was formed in 1938 as part of wider preparations for war through the Air Raid Precautions (ARP) service and thus had its administrative costs met by national government. Women volunteers were recruited to help civilians through emergency rest centres, canteens, first aid and to assist with the mass evacuation of children: it had over a million volunteers at the height of the war. Historian James Hinton argues that the Women's Voluntary Service survived post war because it 'succeeded in convincing Whitehall that it could provide effective auxiliary services for statutory authorities' - despite facing widespread hostility from existing women's voluntary associations.<sup>69</sup> Thus WVS continued to receive government funding for premises and to maintain a small paid clerical staff even after the war had ended. Its founder Lady Reading conceptualised WVS not as 'a

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<sup>66</sup> *Voluntary Service and the State*, 74-81.

<sup>67</sup> Rooff, *Voluntary Societies*, 75.

<sup>68</sup> *Voluntary Service and the State*, 74-81.

<sup>69</sup> James Hinton, *Women, Social Leadership and the Second World War: Continuities of Class* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 232.

voluntary organisation financed by the State, but [as] a State service furnished by volunteers.<sup>70</sup> In addition to the service-delivery roles in hospitals and for older people, WVS also continued to mobilise volunteers during emergencies such as for flood relief in 1946, 1952 and 1953 and during accidents such as the Farnborough Air Display disaster in 1952 and the Lewisham railway accident in 1957.<sup>71</sup>

In the post-war years WVS played a key role in establishing two home-based welfare services in partnership with local authorities, the home help scheme and the meals on wheels service. The home help scheme was based on a model pioneered in Oxford in the early 1940s. The WVS model was for its volunteers to set up and organise local schemes, conduct home visits to assess suitable cases and to supervise the home helps – mainly working-class women – who were paid out of local authority funds. There were similar voluntary schemes started on local initiative such as the one set up by the Exeter Council of Social Service in 1950.<sup>72</sup> However, from the late 1940s local authorities began to employ home helps directly and these were increasingly supervised by paid home help organisers. The WVS-run schemes were wound down so that by 1960 WVS was involved in just six per cent of home help programmes. The WVS's *Report on 25 Years Work* noted that despite their services being dispensed with, the organisation was 'proud to have pioneered the Home Help Service, which has become an integral part of the social pattern in Great Britain'.<sup>73</sup> In contrast to this official WVS history, James Hinton's account of this experiment shows that the WVS leaders were less than keen to yield initiative to paid home help organisers and views this episode 'not as triumphant vindication of the pioneering role of voluntarism, but as a defeat for their attempt to uphold the social leadership of leisured women' volunteers'.<sup>74</sup>

In contrast, WVS managed to hold onto the meals on wheels service much longer. Meals on wheels provided cooked midday meals to older people in their own homes and had been developed during the war by WVS and the National Old People's Welfare Council. Most such schemes developed in London: in 1947 there were just

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<sup>70</sup> Cited in Hinton, *Women*, 217.

<sup>71</sup> *Report on 25 years work*, 16-19.

<sup>72</sup> Helen L Slater, 'Helping Old People A housework Scheme', *Social Service* 26, no. 3 (December 1952-February 1953), 129-131.

<sup>73</sup> *Report on 25 Years Work 1938-1963*, 53.

<sup>74</sup> Hinton, *Women*, 209.

23 schemes outside the capital. Most were run by WVS volunteers, but there were also 20 schemes operated by the National Old People's Welfare Council and a few by the British Red Cross.<sup>75</sup> In their history of services for older people, Robin Means and Randall Smith show that the early drafts of the 1948 National Assistance Act contained no references to meals on wheels, but following media coverage of old people struggling to cope with continued food rationing and lobbying by voluntary groups, the final Act permitted local authorities to fund voluntary organisations to deliver meals. By 1956 there were schemes in 320 areas.<sup>76</sup> The service usually operated in partnership with local authorities and was staffed by large numbers of volunteers as cooks, drivers, book keepers and 'mates' delivering the meals.<sup>77</sup> Thus providing services for older people in the post war years was an ideal way for groups such as the WVS and British Red Cross to justify their continued existence and ongoing mobilisation of large numbers of volunteers in peacetime. Both agencies rapidly developed peacetime welfare services delivered by volunteers but often working closely with local authorities. Work with older people and children were widely identified in government circulars as being key areas in which volunteers could make strong contributions.<sup>78</sup> For instance the WVS expanded its network of 'Darby and Joan' clubs for older people - also pioneered in wartime - some of which were operated independently and others based in hospitals or homes, as well as a range of other services for older people including visiting and laundry services.

Volunteers were central to a number of experiments with social welfare provision in the post-war welfare state and therefore their continued involvement was part of the planning process of those tasked with developing services at local and national level. The expansion of the welfare state in the 1940s and 1950s thus relied on volunteers. However their involvement could provoke tensions. Contrary to the prevailing view outlined above, it may not actually have been in the 1940s and 1950s that volunteers were sidelined, but in the 1960s. Writing on the WVS James Hinton argues that the consolidation of professionalism in the post-war period had led by the 1960s to a decline in status of many volunteer tasks such as those undertaken by largely

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<sup>75</sup> Robin Means and Randall Smith, *From Poor Law to Community Care: The Development of Welfare Services for Elderly People 1939-1971*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Bristol: Policy Press, 1998), 94-6.

<sup>76</sup> WVS, *Report on 25 Years Work 1938-1963* (London: HMSO, 1963), 47.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> M. Penelope Hall, *The Social Services of Modern England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 240.

women volunteers, including the low-skilled work of running hospital trolley services and meals on wheels services.<sup>79</sup> Phyllis Wilmot likewise dates the decline of the volunteer-run Care Committee system to the late 1960s and early 1970s after it was reorganised into the educational welfare service. While the growth of the new profession of Voluntary Services Organiser in hospitals and social services in the 1960s encouraged more volunteers to come forward, it also kept volunteers in their place by ensuring that volunteers' work was more strictly controlled and supervised.

### **New forms of volunteering in 1940s and 1950s**

Undoubtedly the post-war period saw the employment of greater number of professional social workers by both statutory and voluntary associations, but this did not necessarily lead to an immediate decline in the numbers of volunteers, but rather reflected that the overall volume of social welfare work had increased. In her 1934 report on philanthropy Elizabeth Macadam early identified a change in the available type of voluntary worker but argued that the numbers were not fewer. She suggested that the 'whole-time worker' was a thing of the past but that there was an increase in those able to give up part of their leisure time to volunteering. Macadam further argued that it was inevitable that different kinds of volunteering 'will spring up, grow, change and in be in turn superseded' but that this did not signal decline.<sup>80</sup> In fact, analysis of the - admittedly inaccurate - available data suggests that the proportion of people volunteering has changed remarkably little over the course of second half of the twentieth century. A Mass Observation study undertaken for Lord Beveridge's inquiry into voluntary action in 1947-8, found around a third of people with whom their investigators came into contact were giving some form of regular voluntary help to people outside their own families, slightly more than half of these in connection with some type of organisation.<sup>81</sup> About half of the members of the Mass Observation National Panel were themselves involved in voluntary work other than their roles as Mass Observers. Today, about 25 per cent of people volunteer regularly (once a month or more) through an organisation. Reanalysing 31 surveys

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<sup>79</sup> Hinton, *Women*, 212.

<sup>80</sup> Macadam, *New Philanthropy*, 301.

<sup>81</sup> William Beveridge and A. F. Wells (eds.), *The Evidence for Voluntary Action* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1948), 33.

that have asked about volunteering between 1949 and 2010, Hilton et al identify a general upwards trend.<sup>82</sup>

It seems clear that the nature and type of volunteer activity was changing in the 1940s and 1950s. There was extensive debate on how the 'typical volunteer' was changing.<sup>83</sup> Social changes meant that full-time volunteers - such as the middle-class women of the pre-war era - were now seen as 'survivors from a bygone age' and even part-time volunteers were hard to find.<sup>84</sup> The memoranda submitted to Beveridge's inquiry by the British Association of Residential Settlements noted the changing nature of volunteering across settlements, with fewer people able to give full-time unpaid service but greater numbers of part-time volunteers. However, the memoranda reflected positively on the employment of paid workers: 'Every addition to the number of paid workers results in a correspondingly larger number of unpaid helpers', and a consequent employment of more full time workers.<sup>85</sup> In a 1953 lecture on the 'philanthropist in a changing world' educationalist Mary Stocks noted it was wrong to suggest that the volume of spare-time unpaid volunteering was drying up, but argued it was less concentrated in one particular sex or class, and that there had been a large increase in voluntary service for statutory bodies.<sup>86</sup>

The overall professionalisation of the voluntary sector in the post-war years had other knock-on effects on volunteering. There was an increased demand for higher levels of skill and competence among volunteers, such as CAB advisors or marriage guidance counsellors, which will be discussed below. This led to the introduction of more training and supervision of volunteers, although such training was not seen to compete with the technical training of professional social workers.<sup>87</sup> By the 1950s volunteer training was an urgent and difficult problem. In one article historian G. D. H. Cole (1889-1959) suggested that volunteers need to 'catch the spirit of the

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<sup>82</sup> On volunteering rates since the 1940s see chapter 6 in Matthew Hilton, Nick Crowson, Jean-Francois Mouhot and James McKay, *A Historical Guide to NGOs in Britain: Charities, Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector since 1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and figure 6.5 in particular.

<sup>83</sup> 'Editorial', *Social Service*, 24, no. 2 (Sept-No, 1952): 50-51.

<sup>84</sup> 'Editorial', *Social Service*, 24, no. 2 (Sept-No, 1952): 50.

<sup>85</sup> Beveridge and Wells, *Evidence for Voluntary Action*, 122.

<sup>86</sup> Mary Stocks, *The Philanthropist in a Changing World* (Liverpool: University Press, 1953), 21.

<sup>87</sup> S. E. Finer, 'Voluntary Social Service in the Changing Welfare State', *Social Service*, 29, no. 1 (June-August, 1955), 5-10

professionals'.<sup>88</sup> For instance a one-day training conference organised for London Care Committee volunteers in 1957 took as its theme 'The Care Committee in a World of Specialists'.<sup>89</sup> Fearful of such changes, some older voluntary social workers pointed to dangers in professionalising social service so that 'we may set ourselves adrift...from the vitality of our own voluntary roots'.<sup>90</sup> A 1950 editorial in *Social Service*, a quarterly published by the NCSS, explored the changed position of volunteers. Despite the fact that the new welfare services were planned specifically to allow for the use of volunteers, it noted:

When one gets into contact with the officer doing the job there sometimes - not always - tends to be a change. At the worst the prospective volunteer may be regarded as an intruder, even treated with a scarcely-veiled hostility. At best, he may feel himself a harmless nuisance, who must be tolerate, of course, and may be given a nominal or routine job to keep him quiet, but must on no account be trusted with anything really responsible.<sup>91</sup>

Such an editorial was bound to prompt reaction, including a letter from the Chairman of the Central Council of Children's Care Committees, who asserted that all its volunteers had full responsibility for their actions.<sup>92</sup> Was she protesting too much? The evidence on volunteering within the welfare state is mixed.

Turning now to volunteering outside the welfare state, the 1940s and 1950s witnessed the significant mobilisation of volunteers for a wide range of causes. In contrast to depictions of a volunteering movement at 'a low ebb' in the post-war period, even a brief look at these developments reveals a number of innovations. To take some examples of post-war volunteer expansion, organisations including the Family Planning Association (1930), Marriage Guidance Council (1938), Citizens' Advice Bureaux (1939) and the Samaritans (1953) built up strong reputations as

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<sup>88</sup> G. D. H. Cole, 'A Retrospect on the History of Voluntary Social Service' in A. F. C. Bourdillon, *Voluntary Social Services: Their Place in the Modern State*, (London: Methuen and Co, 1945), 29; Stocks, Philanthropist, 19.

<sup>89</sup> Williams et al, *Children of London*, 110; M. Penelope Hall, *The Social Services of Modern England* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), 122-23.

<sup>90</sup> *Social Service* 21, no. 1 (September-November, 1947), 51.

<sup>91</sup> *Social Service* 24, no. 2 (September-November, 1950).

<sup>92</sup> Letter from K. Howlett, *Social Service*, 24, no. 3 (Dec-Feb, 1951), 127.

volunteer-run specialist services. After 1949 with the onset of the Cold War, the Civil Defence movement was also a 'site of massive voluntary effort', recruiting and training half a million volunteers by 1953, to protect the UK in case of enemy attack.<sup>93</sup> Before contraception became free and accessible to all on the NHS in the 1970s, the Family Planning Association (formed in 1930 as the National Birth Control Council) involved large number of volunteers alongside professional and volunteer doctors and nurses in a range of roles including dispensing contraceptives, administrative work and publicising the work of family planning clinics.<sup>94</sup> As its historian noted in this period, the FPA 'relied to a quite remarkable extent on volunteers': in 1960, for example, there were 3,000 non-medical volunteers working alongside 460 doctors and 630 nurses in 336 family planning clinics in the UK.<sup>95</sup> Similarly in 1946 there were 100 independent Marriage Guidance Councils, all relying on specially trained volunteers.<sup>96</sup>

The Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CAB) were set up in 1939 to provide advice and information about all aspects affecting citizens' daily life during wartime including evacuation, war work, requisitioning, rationing, war damage compensation, housing, finding relatives and post-war resettlement. Of the 10,000 men and women who were working in the bureaux at the height of the war, 90 per cent were part-time volunteers.<sup>97</sup> As with the WVS, questions were raised at the end of the war over the future role of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux, particularly in the face of the government resolution to establish what many saw as a rival Resettlement Advice Service for discharged service personnel and munitions workers, as well as local authority plans to introduce information services. Discussions at CAB conferences in the immediate post-war period reveal a volunteer-led movement keen to retain independence from central government, local authorities and the NCSS-based headquarters alike, yet struggling with questions of funding, bureaux closure and volunteer training. Speaking at a 1945 CAB conference Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of

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<sup>93</sup> Matthew Grant, "'Civil Defence gives meaning to your leisure'": Citizenship, Participation and Cultural Change in Cold War Recruitment Propaganda, 1949-1954', *Twentieth Century British History* 22, no. 1 (2011): 52-78.

<sup>94</sup> Margot Jefferys, *An Anatomy of Social Welfare Services: A Survey of Social Welfare Staff and their Clients in the County of Buckinghamshire* (London: Michael Joseph, 1965), 287-91.

<sup>95</sup> Audrey Leathard, *The Fight for Family Planning: The Development of Family Planning Services in Britain 1921-74* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 119.

<sup>96</sup> E. M. Howell Davies, 'Marriage Guidance', *Social Service* 23 no. 1 (June-August, 1949): 28-33.

<sup>97</sup> Margaret Brasnett, *The Story of the Citizens' Advice Bureaux* (London: NCSS: 1964), 33.

Labour and National Service, Mr McCorquodale MP argued that one reason for government starting its own scheme was that any organisation depending largely or entirely on voluntary work would give rise to variations in service provision.<sup>98</sup> In practice, however, the CABx continued to offer a wide range of advice and information services. Although several hundred bureaux did close down after the war - mainly smaller branches in rural areas - in 1948 there were still 567, many of which received financial grants or help-in-kind (such as premises, lighting, heating and telephone) from local authorities. By the time Margaret Brasnett was writing the organisation's silver jubilee history, the larger bureaux had some paid staff, but 70 per cent of the several thousand workers were still part-time volunteers, who needed 'patience, observation, discretion, sympathy but a certain detachment' as well as comprehensive knowledge of statutory and voluntary provisions. In 1954, for example, there were 480 self-governing CABx across the country, each run by a volunteer committee and recruiting and training volunteer advisors locally. Brasnett recorded that:

The particular contribution of the citizens' advice bureaux to the history of voluntary workers in the modern state lies in their power to attract so many people who have between them a range of qualifications and depth of experience that could not be made available for the benefit of the ordinary citizen in any other way; to offer a piece of work that engages the whole man in service to everyman.<sup>99</sup>

All these voluntary organisations had in common the successful reliance on large numbers of trained and skilled volunteers organised at local and regional level, who were supported by a small, centrally located professional staff and with training and information materials produced at headquarters. In the 1940s, for example, the Marriage Guidance Council insisted on training consisting of lectures and a short residential course for all its volunteer counsellors, as 'the risk of using unqualified people is too great.'<sup>100</sup> Likewise CAB volunteer interviewers were expected to keep their knowledge up to date through reference to handbooks and the publication *CAB*

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<sup>98</sup> NCSS, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux After the War: Report of a National Conference* (London: NCSS, 1945)

<sup>99</sup> Brasnett, *Citizens' Advice Bureaux*, 53.

<sup>100</sup> Howell Davies, 'Marriage Guidance', 31.

Notes.<sup>101</sup> A 1989 history of the CAB reports that volunteer recruitment and training remained an ongoing challenge during the 1950s and 1960s. Despite conference resolutions and reports requiring more training, it was harder to implement this on the ground; former CAB volunteers reported training was minimal and that too many organisers and management committees were marred by deference to professional male volunteers.<sup>102</sup>

It is in the 1940s too that a new group of organisations described in the Aves Report as 'self help' groups emerged, including: the National Old People's Welfare Council (1940), National Society for Mentally Handicapped Children (1946), The National Association for Mental Health (formed in 1946 from a merger of older organisations) and the Spastics Society (1951).<sup>103</sup> All of these enlisted large numbers of volunteers to organise local services and activities for members and their families. A particularly important area of growing volunteer activity after the Second World War was in the provision of services and leisure activities for older people. By 1963 there were 7,000 older people's clubs in England and Wales, with a membership of more than 14 in 100 people over the age of retirement. Although some of the larger clubs employed a paid manager, most were run by volunteer leaders (usually women) assisted by a team of helpers who were often older people themselves.<sup>104</sup>

A further variant of volunteering which enjoyed its boom years in the 1940s and 1950s was the workcamp movement. Workcamps were a type of service where volunteers – usually young people and students, and often from different countries – worked as a group to complete a practical project in a time-limited period, such as a few weeks or months. The spirit of friendship in which the service was offered was as important as the work done. The movement originated in the inter-war years and in Britain camps were run by the Youth Hostels Association of England and Wales, International Voluntary Service (the British branch of Pierre Ceresole's Service Civil International) and the Society of Friends as well as by various students' unions and university groups including the NUS. In 1948 the United Nations Educational,

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<sup>101</sup> Nancy Hidden, 'Can I Help You?', *Social Service* 21, no. 4 (March-May, 1948), 166-7.

<sup>102</sup> Jean Richards, *Inform, Advise and Support: 50 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1989), 102-7.

<sup>103</sup> Now known as Age UK, Mencap, MIND and Scope.

<sup>104</sup> National Old People's Welfare Council, *Leisure in Later Years: A Handbook of Leisure-time Activities and Club Work for the Elderly* (London: NCSS, 1963).

Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco) convened the First Conference of Organizers of International Voluntary Workcamps.<sup>105</sup> In the immediate post-war period, workcamps offered British youth the opportunities for travel and cultural exchange, for developing practical skills and for making friendships. In the 1930s this had been mainly in different parts of the UK and Europe, by the 1950s it included adventure in Eastern Europe and in developing countries. Experiments with workcamps in developing countries in the 1950s also led to the emergence of a new international volunteering movement in the 1960s.<sup>106</sup>

## Conclusion

This working paper has sought to pull together some of the latest literature dealing with the history of volunteering in twentieth-century England. First, it has argued that there was a volunteering - or what was earlier known as a 'social service' - movement before the 1960s which was marked by the formation of organisations which sought to recruit and support volunteers; debate and discussion around volunteer training and social study; and engagement with questions about the role of volunteers in relation to state and local authority-provided services. Second, it has shown that far from being an afterthought introduced in the 1960s and 1970s, the introduction of state welfare services in the 1940s and 1950s depended on the work of volunteers. This was recognised by contemporary voluntary sector commentators but seems to have been forgotten by later scholars. In particular the extension of state services for key groups such as children, older people and the disabled was felt to depend 'more on a supply of volunteers than anything else'.<sup>107</sup> It is becoming increasingly evident that involving volunteers was integral to extension of state welfare services from the Edwardian era onwards, even as a new range of professions emerged. Moreover debate about the nature and role of volunteers in statutory services has been a feature of discussion on public administration throughout the twentieth century, not something that took place only during the so-

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<sup>105</sup> Arthur Gillette, *One Million Volunteers: The Story of Volunteer Youth Service* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

<sup>106</sup> Georgina Brewis, 'Youth in action? British young people and voluntary service 1958 – 1970' in *Beveridge and Voluntary Action in Britain and the wider British World*, ed. Melanie Oppenheimer and Nicholas Deakin (Manchester University Press, 2011): 94-108.

<sup>107</sup> A. M. Struthers, 'The Volunteer Committee Member', *Social Service* 24, no. 3 (Dec-Feb, 1951), 125.

called volunteer boom. In addition, figures suggest that volunteering levels in Britain have remained remarkably consistent since the 1940s.

Finally, the paper has argued that there was considerable change and innovation in volunteering in the decades immediately following the Second World War. Alongside the professionalisation of the voluntary sector and the increased employment of qualified social workers in state and voluntary-run services, there was a demand for better training and more highly skilled volunteers. Volunteers extended the reach of state services, pioneered new programmes, and continued to offer a 'human face' to welfare services. Their deployment was not without controversy however, and accusations of perceived unreliability and amateurishness continued to plague the volunteer movement. Some voluntary organisations attempted to move beyond these stereotypes by insistence on a high level of skill and training as well as exerting ever closer central control. Moreover, the paper has briefly considered other forms of volunteering - such as self-help groups, leisure associations, workcamping and specialist advice services - that flourished in the post-war period but are usually omitted from the story of volunteering. This may be because the prevailing view is linked to a narrow view of volunteering as 'service delivery'. Moreover, much of what has been written about volunteering has been shaped by an overriding concern to provide an account of government's approach to the voluntary sector in general and volunteering in particular. The richness and diversity of the volunteering movement in the past has been underplayed by a tendency to conflate 'volunteering' with 'the voluntary sector'. There is scope for much more research to address these questions, and it has been the intention of this working paper to suggest some possible ways forward.

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