

Betty Philip 02.12.25

Interviewer: So this is Lauren Beatty interviewing Betty Philip for the Young Women's Movement Young Women Remember project on Tuesday the 2nd of December 2025. To begin for the recording can you please confirm the following for me so your name?

Interviewee: Betty Philip.

Interviewer: And where were you born?

Interviewee: Tannadice.

Interviewer: And what's your connection to the Y or the Young Women's Movement?

Interviewee: Um...Do you mean when did I join it?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: I joined when I was 13 to join the first aid group.

Interviewee: Great, okay thanks very much, um, before we find out a little bit more about that would you mind sharing when you were born?

Interviewee: 24/ 2/ 35.

Interviewer: And where did you grow up?

Interviewee: Mainly in Blairgowrie.

Interviewer: And where else have you lived? So you were in Blairgowrie, where else have you lived?

Interviewee: Several places.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: But Blairgowrie is the longest one that I was staying... Rosemount near Blairgowrie we stayed.

Interviewer: Um, and...Okay so when did you sort of hear about the organisation and join?

Interviewee: Probably when I was 13 when we joined the Red Cross unit.

Interviewer: Okay and can you remember what inspired that and what sort of, what connected you to find out about it?

Interviewee: I think it must have been at school we were asked if anybody wanted to join the Red Cross. Must have been in the classroom at Blairgowrie High School.

Interviewer: Blairgowrie High School, great, and can you tell me a little bit more about that then? So when you joined when you were 13 what did that look like for you? What did you do?

Interviewee: Well they had a Red Cross lady and there was several of us there, maybe a dozen and she came once a week and we were tested on the things that we were taught and then as I say we had to go into this inter-club Red Cross thing, little units around Perth all took part and we won the cup that year because we were the best out of a lot of them. So Mrs Robertson was the lady in charge and we learnt to... All about first aid, how to bandage, how to do most things at our age which was very good. Still remember it now [laughing].

Interviewer: That's great, that's great. And where did you all meet?

Interviewee: In the YWCA.

Interviewer: In the YWCA?

Interviewee: In the YWCA, in William Street Blairgowrie.

Interviewer: Great, that's great. And can you remember what that was like and describe the sort of the building and what it was like?

Interviewee: Two-storey building , upstairs and downstairs and in fact the primary school used it at schools. We had to move the desks to clear the hall if we were having dances or anything because there was not enough accommodation in Blairgowrie and they used every hall in Blairgowrie to educate the children. So, if we were having a dance as we grew older we had dances on a Saturday night, once a month, country dancing and we had to lift all the desks and pile them up and half the time we got them back the wrong order. The children were sitting in desks that wasn't theirs [laughing] because we had to put them back. It had a stage and we acted. Upstairs was a smaller classroom. They had a kitchen and a bathroom, a toilet.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: It's still there today because I passed it when I was up at Blairgowrie this week, you know at the weekend? It's still there. I think it was brought over by a church I think.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: No it's still there.

Interviewer: That's great. So what sort of activities did you get involved in at that point when you were going to the Y?

Interviewee: Well, as I said we were doing our Red Cross training and I helped with Miss Marshall with a group I think and that's when I said I would like to work with children and she suggested we come to Edinburgh and do training. That's when the girls from Kirkcaldy and um... What did I say it was? Where Barbara came from? Elgin.

Interviewer: Elgin.

Interviewee: Elgin, and we're still friends, well Jean has died now, but still friends with Barbara all these years. We were 16 and up when we were taught and I did a course in one of the colleges in Dundee, just an open course.

Interviewer: That's great. So what were the courses then? What were they like?

Interviewee: It was just youth training. It was just working with children.

Interviewer: And then when you were doing these roles for the Y was that voluntary?

Interviewee: Everything. Everything I did was voluntary.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: I worked here in Edinburgh for 44 years, voluntary work, working with about 100 children a week.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: That was really great, yeah.

Interviewer: So can you tell me a little bit more about that, your work in Edinburgh and the clubs that you did?

Interviewee: I was on a lot of committees in Edinburgh. We used to have youth hostels for girls. Lothian Road, do you know Lothian Road? They were there and one in Randolph Place, no, Randolph Crescent. I helped to open a nearly new shop in Cosby Side, ran a charity shop in Stockbridge for them, did play in hospitals in the Western. The nearly new shop was, you took your stuff to the nearly new shop and you got two thirds back when it was sold and the Y kept a third...Yes, a third and what wasn't sold, and if you didn't want it back, hence we started the charity shop because of that and often the wives group got the rubbish that was left for a jumble sale in Braid Church in Morningside. I sat on Edinburgh Council, was vice president of that. I think that's about it, I think.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: Not sure but [laughing].

Interviewer: That's amazing.

Interviewee: It'll be all in here.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Because when you're asking questions it's hard to remember.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: But the club work was the basics, you know, working with girls, and then I did a, the YW was in George Street and they asked if I would do a coffee bar, drop-in coffee bar, five nights a week. That was before Gary was born and I did and I took, with the help of Jean Fleming, the other worker from Kirkcaldy and my husband, we took about 35 by bus and a boat to go to Holland, Amsterdam [laughing].

Interviewer: Wow. Oh, can you tell me a bit more about that? That sounds amazing.

Interviewee: I don't know [laughing]. We took them on holiday but we took Birdiehouse as well. We took them to Kilmory Castle. It's now the, it was the boys clubs in Glasgow that had it and we were there for a week and I took them to Cambusbarron for another week, the following year, they were just great kids, and one of the boys wasn't allowed to come because he had a police record or something but he hitchhiked up, brought his own tent, slept in the grounds in the Kilmory Castle and I paid for his meals...So, brave...Yeah He was good. The Kilmory Castle now is the, I think the headquarters for the Grampian Council, I think now and Kilmory Castle, um, what did I say? Cambusbarron...It was boys clubs as well in Glasgow that we... And it was, the kids had a lovely time away. It was just great.

Interviewer: So was this sort of during summer holidays and things like that?

Interviewee: Yes, probably the first week in July. That's when they were all off work, you know, it was the trades fortnight.

Interviewer: That's great and so, was this just kind of fundraising through the Y that supported that, that paid to take the children?

Interviewee: No, we paid our own way.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: The leaders weren't paid, we...In the coffee bar, they could buy coffee and I used to bake and make tablet and that, and that helped to get equipment because they had table games, listen to music, or we had the use of the big hall that they could play badminton and I was there on the Friday and Gary was born on the Monday [laughing].

Interviewer: Wow. So you didn't take a break, you just...

Interviewee: So it was, it was just good fun and the kids liked it. Yeah, they were all, no, we never had any trouble with any of the children.

Interviewer: That's brilliant, and when Gary came along, did you just take him with you?

Interviewee: No, no, no. After Gary came along, I had a year out and then I went back to do five to 12 year old girls, no more teenagers and if I started a group, I got two young girls, maybe that was training to be teachers? Normally people I knew, friends as children, they took over once I started it so that I could go and round the clubs every week so that I would, because my husband had a job that took him abroad a lot...So that I wasn't in charge of,

unless the girls were going on holiday or something. So then after Gary grew up, I was back doing clubs, you know, a club of my own again.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah but when we had, we called them the extension clubs and if we had a monthly meeting, Gary came at my feet, because we always had it about six early, so the girls who were working could come straight from work for the meetings and Gary used to just play with his cars at my feet if my husband wasn't home. So he was definitely brought up with the YW [laughing].

Interviewer: That's nice.

Interviewee: But there was such a lot going on then, because Mrs. Steele, the secretary, she was a great worker for the Y. She really worked hard on it, you know, to get it up and running. It was amazing the work she did and then they moved from George Street round to 7 Randolph Place and they had a cafeteria and everything, you know, I think a cleared table's in the cafeteria as well. Everybody did a lot of voluntary work then.

Interviewer: Yeah. Was there a creche at that time? Do you remember?

Interviewee: No, no. I think we started a young wives group, but not in the outwith the building. That's why when I came up to Morningside to live, there was no young wives. That's why I... None of the churches had young wives. Hence I started one in the house. I don't think there's any young wives in the churches now. You know, my church doesn't have it. Don't have the guild or anything.

Interviewer: Yeah, can you tell me, I know we'll have a separate meeting with the young wives group, but can you tell me a little bit about the young wives group and when you met and why you set that up? You said a little bit there that obviously there wasn't anything for young wives at the time.

Interviewee: That's why I started it. We raised a lot of money. The, I call it the women's interest group, because it changed its name as we got older and we had, we went away picnics with the children, bus trips. We had an Easter picnic in the park for them, up at the Braid, beside the Braid church, and there would be about 60 of us. There would be the dads, the mums, and the children, all rolling their eggs down the hill. Then we had a picnic, then we had races, and then we had rounders and one day it snowed, and there's a shelter just down from the Braid Hills Hotel, and we were all in there but if you ask the youngsters, they liked the Y... And we all, the wives group always had a coffee morning to raise money, but... Beetle Drives, we dressed up and had concerts. Like the YW, I had the young entertainers in Morningside, and we entertained the old folks homes in Morningside with that group. You know, they would play the clarinet, while Gary played the clarinet. I had them dancing, they had them reciting, singing, just short things for them to do, and it was only an hour long. But we entertained the care homes. In fact, I think I had the Birdiehouse teenagers entertaining Douglas House, which is a Salvation Army house over at Firhill there. Green Bank, it was an old folks home as well, it's now all houses but we entertained there as well. God, the poor kids never had a chance when I was [laughing]... But the young wives, they loved getting

dressed up and had concerts. We raised an awful lot of money to get the YW women's group. We had a thousand pound for a guide dog, and we had speakers often, and whoever the speakers we had, they all got money at the end of the year. We kept a girl at school in the Lebanon, I think. I've got that somewhere else. The YW paid for her schooling, yeah, for several years and our last project was Braidburn School, and we wanted to raise about a thousand, but we got eight hundred and something.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: And we planted a tree for the 25th along the Oaklands and Cairn Lane. We planted the second half of the grass in Morningside, the Hermitage, opposite the open door. We planted crocuses there. We paid, we bought the crocuses and we got the town gardeners to plant them. So every time you passed, the bottom half was the guides, and we were the top half. Oh, and I had the ladies and their husbands horse riding as well, but I'll let them tell you. I didn't. I went the first time, but horse riding is not my forte. I organised it but what was good about the ladies group was, I think I was the treasurer, but every girl, every lady did, there was no secretary or things. Everybody took a turn of organising a speaker, introducing them and thanking them, so that everybody got a chance of doing that, which I thought was good.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: And our Beetle Drives, they were great things as well [laughing].

Interviewer: Can you explain what a Beetle Drive is?

Interviewee: Oh, do you not know? Oh, you get beetle drive cards.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: And you have four at a table, and you shake a dice, and I think you need a two to start with, that's the body, and then you need a one for the head. Gosh, Gary...I've got a pile in the cupboard and I said to Gary, no, don't throw them out, keep them, because I think he wanted them as well... And a beetle has 14 points, because there's ...Got two wings, two feelers, is it six legs? It's 14, I think, and when you get 14, you shout beetle and everybody stops. The losers sit at the table, the winners move on to the next table. It's just hilarity, it's a good way of making money, because the people that supported us, they were going out the door saying, Betty, when are you having the next one? And I said, next year [laughing] because it was only once a year but it's a lovely way of entertaining children. If you like, and you can reach out for me, I can give you a copy of a beetle drive paper.

Interviewer: Thank you, that would be great.

Interviewee: Oh gosh, it's the one way of getting money and we had that in the...And when we were using Morningside School, we were actually sitting in desks, would you believe it? We were sitting in the school desks, and the speakers were coming to us.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: And we had, when I was in my house, the speakers came to sit in my sitting room, and they talked to us in the sitting room.

Interviewer: Can you remember some of the speakers?

Interviewee: That we had when?

Interviewer: For... Just any of the speakers that you had, sort of examples of some of the speakers you had.

Interviewee: Well, there was the guide dog, floral art. We had a speaker often. Like Red Cross. Just any, any firm, not firm, any organisation, what can I think about?

Interviewer: No, that sounds good, that's a good example.

Interviewee: It's all just people out there come to talk to us, and then we would give them a donation at the end of the year, when we've balanced the books, maybe about what their job was.

Interviewer: Yeah. Sounds good.

Interviewee: Like, you would come and tell us about whatever you were doing, or, I'm trying, you've put me...

Interviewer: No, no, I didn't mean to put you on the spot, I just, it's good, no, that's perfectly fine.

Interviewee: I mean, it was different speakers, and everybody liked to come. You know, it was usually charities telling us about their charity, and how they made money and things, lifeboats and things like that.

Interviewer: Yeah, sounds great. Sounds very varied as well.

Interviewee: Oh, it was, yes, it was, yes. Yeah.

Interviewer: I wondered as well, just with you mentioning, there was a couple of things you mentioned, you mentioned taking the school kids, the kids that you looked after to Holland on a trip, and obviously the connection with raising money for the girl with the school in Lebanon and I wondered, because we asked this quite a lot, is obviously, whether the mo... At the time, it felt like a global movement, the Y?

Interviewee: Oh God, yes, we were worldwide at that time, yes. Probably, the girls will maybe remember, although they were all over 90, the Lebanon girl and I know in the filing cabinet, I've got something about the Y, but that's relevant to the wives group, how we raised the money, you know, for the girl at the Lebanon. I think we kept her at school for two years... Sure it was the Lebanon girl... And if the Y, I remember the group at Morningside School, I was doing it with Barbara, that was the other leader that trained with

me and the YW, we had to do something for the environment and we cleared the Braidburn burn from the gate right to Oxfords, and we took out 13 bags of rubbish and we had to phone up the corporation and get them to take it away and again, we did the most, so Morningside got a certificate for doing it, for clearing all that rubbish. I just provided the girls, they brought their wellies, and I provided them with rubber gloves but I couldn't believe it, we took 13 bags of rubbish in that one area. It's a walk along the Braidburn from the gates right to Oxfords here but there you go, those are things I've done, I'm sorry [laughing].

Interviewer: No, that's great. I was just thinking, when you tell me all these things that you've done, was it basically, how did it sort of interact with your day-to-day life? Was it almost like a full-time job, you know, were you involved a lot?

Interviewee: No, I never really looked at it as a full-time job, no.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: So how did it sort of interact? How often were you, was it a couple of days a week, or how did it sort of play into your day-to-day?

Interviewee: Well, once Gary was up, it depended. Once I got a unit started and I maybe got someone to take it over, maybe two, I was doing two clubs a week myself maybe, but after I got somebody in to do it, I was maybe just going around them once a week, you know, a different club once a week, once I got it organised.

Interviewer: And the clubs, were they at weekends, were they evenings after school?

Interviewee: No, no, no, they were school days. **Interviewer:** School days? **Interviewee:** They had to be, because we were meeting free in the schools.

Interviewer: Oh, right, so you were actually going into schools?

Interviewee: It all took part in the school, every school. We worked in, gosh, I worked in a lot of schools. Birdiehouse, Hyvots Bank there's no Hyvots Bank now, Morningside, Buxton, Craiglockhart, there's no Oxfords, Broughton, Sighthill, Stenhouse, we just had them all over the place.

Interviewer: Okay, so you went into schools during the school day, did it?

Interviewee: No, no, school night.

Interviewer: School night, so it was after school?

Interviewee: It was six to eight.

Interviewer: Six to eight.

Interviewee: Yeah, and we didn't pay, the corporation gave us that free, and they paid for the janitor. So, oh, Craiglockhart was well, because Craiglockhart was two stairs up, and I got two girls to do it. They were training as teachers, I think, it was mainly students I got, just through people knowing them and I remember going up, and the dads weren't coming up, it was a rule, you brought the children to the leader, and you collected them from the leader, that was a rule and I said to the girls, where are all the dads?

Interviewee: Oh, no, she said, the girls go down. I said, no. So I went away down and said to the dads, the leaders don't know who the children are going with. On your letter, you had to collect them from the leaders. They did after that. They were just too lazy to climb up the stairs. However, I explained to the dads, the leaders are letting them come down here, but we don't know who the children are going with and you were responsible for those children. So after that they... I think that was the only school I had any problems with the dads collecting the children, because it was two flights up.

Interviewer: Can you let me know the sort of dates that you were doing this?

Interviewee: Oh, it was all wintertime. It was from the start of August when the children went back, to when they closed in summertime.

Interviewer: Right, yeah and the sort of decades that you were doing this in, the period that you started and then finished doing the clubs, roughly?

Interviewee: Sorry?

Interviewer: Not understand... No, for yourself, when you started doing the clubs...

Interviewee: Oh, well, when I started doing club work?

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: I would be 16 in Aylith and then I was probably 16, 18 and when I got married, I came down to Edinburgh, I was 24 and that's when I was handed the teenagers.

Interviewer: Okay, so would have been from like the 50s?

Interviewee: Oh it was the 50s, 60s.

Interviewer: 50s, 60s, right up, when did you stop?

Interviewee: [Laughing] When I was 70, I think.

Interviewer: Wow, yeah.

Interviewee: Because I was working and then going straight up to Buxton to do it. And I thought, this is mad, Betty. Yeah, I was about 70 when I stopped.

Interviewer: So did you, you were working at the time as well as doing this?

Interviewee: On a Friday night, the club I was taking at that time was Buxton and I was working all day and then going up, I was in my late 60s.

Interviewer: Where were you working at the time?

Interviewee: I was working in a... I used to work in Morningside School, but I had to give it up because I was looking at my father-in-law stayed with us and I had to give it up. So to keep me sane, I worked on a Friday and a Saturday in a gents outfitter Morningside because Gary was there on the Friday and my husband was there on the Saturday with my father-in-law, I looked after him for 11 years. So, he got that I didn't want to leave him. So I had to give up the school because I was at the theatre, was it last year? Yeah, last year at the pantomime and this girl said to me, you were a teacher in Morningside. I said, no, I wasn't a teacher, but I did work in Morningside School. She said, she recognised me, but I was working in Morningside School and I was also doing a club in Morningside School and I was doing secretarial, when the secretary was ill as well. I was playing a lot of parts in Morningside School because they knew me... And I said, no, I wasn't a teacher, but I did take the classes out. You know, I was a helper at school, but she recognised me. It was unbelievable that she recognised me. I'm sure it was last year when we were at the theatre. She came down to help my friend up the, you know, up the stairs. She said, did you work? But she was young, but she said, and maybe she was in my youth club as well. You know, the YW Youth Club.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: So, but I didn't recognise, she was just one of the children.

Interviewer: It'd be hard, I suppose. You would have seen so many children come and go over the years. It would be so difficult.

Interviewee: In fact, I'm still keep in touch with two of the Birdiehouse kids that I met in 1959. They've got married and we don't keep in touch much, but at the Christmas time and that we do. Isn't that unbelievable?

Interviewer: It's brilliant. It just shows the connections though and the impact, you know, that it's having on your life, but obviously on theirs as well, because they are, they're becoming, you know, lifelong friends essentially.

Interviewee: Yeah, a lot of the people in the drop-in coffee bar married as well. It's amazing, isn't it? But I was at Anne and Greg's wedding and they still live out in Birdiehouse, yeah. That's crazy. Strange, isn't it?

Interviewer: So, am I right in thinking then that you were involved with the clubs probably from... Interviewee: 1959.

Interviewer: Right up to like 2000s, would you have finished roughly? Because you said you were...

Interviewee: Yes, probably.

Interviewer: Probably then, that's a long time. So you would have seen a lot of...

Interviewee: Youngsters.

Interviewer: Yeah, a lot of youngsters and a lot of...

Interviewee: In fact, when my husband died and my son went away to work in the Netherlands and I was driving in the dark, you know, these strange places through housing schemes, I got an [laughing] inflatable man and he sat, when I came out of the schools, from the back seat, he came and sat in the front. It's caused an awful lot of laughter, my inflatable man, my blown up man, because...

Interviewer: Just to give you that safety?

Interviewee: Well, yes, because I put, he was just a torso, but he had hair and I put my husband's anorak on and put paper up his sleeves and put a hat and a scarf on and I did read just recently, a young girl in Morningside had one, because she'd stopped at Greggs and Morningside Road is a clear way from half past four to half past six and she stopped at Greggs and the traffic warden said that the passenger was an insolent man [laughing]. When she came out, he said, he's a silent passenger. No, they're great.

Interviewer: Brilliant.

Interviewer: Well, for me going into housing schemes, although my friends said just phone them, but I didn't want to phone them and bother them, no way, but we were having a family meal up at Blairgowrie and my sister Ivy said, do you know Betty's got a man under her bed? Well, you can just imagine the hilarity and the uproar in the hotel.

Interviewer: Sounds like a good, like a good, like it was a good time.

Interviewee: But I think it's good for young people to, especially now, because he did look like a passenger. If you're driving, coming in through all these houses and coming out from the schools.

Interviewer: Mm hmm.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, that sounds great. Can you tell me a little bit about the people that you worked with, the other members, the volunteers that you worked with at the time that were running the clubs with you?

Interviewee: Well, they were all young like you.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: They were all young like you. I did have one lady, a neighbour, um, she helped me sometimes to go around, um, she, she did work for the, I can't remember, for children and if I wasn't able to go, she went round. You know, if I couldn't go that night, she went just to check if everything was all right but we were all unpaid. We weren't, none of us, well the girls were paid two pound a night, I think. So we had to raise money so that I could pay them two pound a night but when the, when I was doing Buxton and it got so busy, one of the girls who was a member, her sister used to always bring her and I said to her, would you like to come and help me? Because you can't, you need two people, especially when you've got a large amount because toilets stop...Two have to be, one has to be in the room and one has to be in the toilet. So she came and helped and she, I got, she was paid two pound.

Interviewer: So were you a leader at the time?

Interviewee: Yes, I was a leader at that time. I was leading that group. Yeah.

Interviewer: Were there any men in the organisation at the time involved?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: Not, it was all women?

Interviewee: Well my husband helped me with Birdiehouse. It was mostly women.

Interviewer: What did working with the organisation mean to you at the time?

Interviewee: Oh my life, I loved it.

Interviewer: That's lovely.

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: So it meant everything to you at the time?

Interviewee: Oh gosh, I loved working with the children. Anything I did with the Y, it was my life.

Interviewer: Oh that's lovely. Do you have any, I appreciate this is quite a big question and you might have a few examples, but I just wondered, do you have any sort of really fond memories that you'd like to share of your time or things that happened that really stick in your mind?

Interviewee: Well, maybe wee Susan, up at Buxton, holding my hand and then the fourth night she comes in and said, can I join in? I felt that I'd given her courage.

Interviewer: So she was, she was sort of reluctant to join, wasn't she?

Interviewee: I think she was shy. She was an only child, but no, and after, up there when we had the sponsored silence, they came in the next week and said, could they have it again? So they must have enjoyed the peace. I don't know.

Interviewer: Can you talk me through the sponsored silences again and how that, what you did?

Interviewee: Well, we were raising money for a charity plus keeping some for ourselves to buy more equipment and record, well, tapes for the tape, you know, for the disco, um, because when they came in, it was games, silent time and then it was dancing, you know, dancing or whatever they wanted to do but it was games mainly and then had a quiet time. What did you ask me again?

Interviewer: About the sponsored silence, how you did, how you managed that?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was no bother. They just came in, they got their sheet to colour in, they got three sweeties for 15 minutes. I had them lined up both sides of the wall because it was quite a small room we were in, we were in, I can't remember, it wasn't a hall we were in, we were in the library or a smaller room and they were up the middle and it was, they just enjoyed it, and as I say, I had Barbara adjudicating that she could sign their papers, but the mothers couldn't believe that they actually had stayed quiet but we always had sponsored some things to raise money, but often it was maybe jiving or something, but they can do that any time. That's why I had to give them a challenge. I think sponsored was the only quiet one I ever did with the children because it was maybe something else we did but they all, we always had a sponsored item for charity and for our own funds because honestly, there was no money. So I had, I went to the paper shops, the, when I say paper shops, the paper and paint shop and I got all the old papers, you know, the wallpaper that was deleted, I got all that stuff, went to Laura Munbeith and got material. I was always begging for stuff so that I had... My husband gave me reams of computer paper, you know, so that we always had stuff and like, I made that fur cone thing, and, oh, that was the wives group I had, that's different. We used to go and collect stones. My husband and I down at Crammond, little stones, and my house along there had a basement and the wives, the ladies, when we were going to have a coffee morning, brought anything old, like an old pot without a handle, an old, anything. and we stuck, we stuck these stones onto the pot with poly filler. Then the next week they came up and varnished them and we sold them at the sale [laughing] and we had this new member came and we were talking about all the things, how we raised money and this girl said, and you sold them, Betty? I said, yes, we did, dear, and it went just like that. You know, if you had an extra jar or a bottle or something, we just covered them with little stones and varnished them. Now, what else did we do? It was always...Oh, long ago, squeezey came in little round bottles. So we decorate, cut the top off and decorated them with nice material and they were pencil cases. It's amazing what we made out of nothing. It's the same as that. I made that for, and the young people that work with children and the church and that, they were taking photographs of it so they could go and do it with their children because apart from the spray and the two eyes, it costs nothing to make. Everything had to be as cheap as possible because there wasn't the money to be

doing fancy stuff because the boss I worked with in the gents outfitter, he said, what do you do with all that rubbish you collect? I said, I use it, dear, I use it. We had to, there wasn't the money. We couldn't go out... Pencils and crayons we bought, but the paper and that were all just reused paper and things. There wasn't the money to have three clubs with 35 children in each. It had to be reused stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Recycled, now everything's recycled but I was doing it all my life in the YW.

Interviewer: Yeah, wow. It's great though, it sounds like you've had a lot of fun.

Interviewee: Yes, the Y was a great place to work.

Interviewer: Um...What did you? Did you learn anything in particular or take anything away from it in particular at the time, your involvement?

Interviewee: With the children?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Just that I loved working with children.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: And I mean, I still get on with all the young people here. I had a paper boy one time, they had him three years, and he rung the bell the last, and I said, oh Robbie, you're really late this morning and his mum was with him and she said, he's got something to ask you. I said, right Robbie... He wanted to take me for coffee because I always had time to listen to what he had a problem with. Wasn't that nice? I'll never forget that but I said, Robbie, you come to me and I'll make the coffee.

Interviewer: That's lovely.

Interviewer: I think listening to people, listening to what they have to tell you is so important. Nobody listens now. They're too busy with other things but I think being a good listener is something that you have to learn to do if you're a club leader because you're going to get lots of stories and problems that they have that you can help them with. I think that is important. I mean, I'm Betty to everybody here, the postman, everybody, because I have time to. In fact, this little girl wanted to meet me, so he brought her down one day because I talk to all the children and all the youth and all the young people in here. You know, they like to have a chat and I like to know what they're doing. Not nosy, just interested in how their course is going or what. I think it's important to be a listener.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that's one of your main...

Interviewee: And not to raise your voice.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Because if you raise your voice, the children raise their voices. Whatever you do, they copy. No. My husband said I was, I had the patience of a saint and what was the other thing? Patience of a saint and I can't remember what the other thing was. I was very artistic with... I used to make wedding cakes for the family and I made every little flower or a spray that I put on the cake. Patience, that was it. Patience of a saint. I can't remember. An easy going, I think but my husband couldn't believe I'd sit all night making little flowers to wire together for a wedding cake.

Interviewer: That's great.

Interviewee: Because you see, I wanted to be a home economics teacher. I still bake a lot. Not as much as I used to, but I still bake.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's amazing. Could you tell me a little bit about the committee meetings that you went to and things like that?

Interviewee: That was a monthly meeting. That would be for Edinburgh Council or for the hostels. It was just once a month to make sure that everything was run properly. In fact, I forgot, we had a hostel, no, a flat down Buchanan Street. It's down Leith Walk. Is it Buchanan Street? It's just off Leith Walk. We had a flat for a mother who was pregnant and a mother and a baby. They stayed in this flat and I was on that committee as well. It was just like extension clubs. We had a committee for that as well. All the leaders came in and we had the secre...Treasurer, you know, at the meeting. The leaders would see what the problems were and things like that. The same as Edinburgh Council, it met once a month. That was just taking the whole of all the clubs and all the unit to discuss to them what had to be done. The hostels weren't, I don't think, once a month, but I was on that as well.

Interviewer: Can you remember? I appreciate that you were involved for a long time and over several decades, but can you remember some of the key core aims of the movement at the time that you were involved? Some of the initiatives or key aims and what was on the agenda when you were...

Interviewee: Well, it was always to do with the running of that particular group. You know, say the Y headquarters, Edinburgh Council, maybe there had been a problem somewhere, they had to resolve it. You know, um, maybe needing a new leader or whatever the case may be. Somebody wanting more people to do something or if there was a sale coming up, you know, having a sale in the big hall in George Street or some random place and that's one thing we did with the extension groups. We got all the children on a bus going from school to school and bringing them all into the main building and have just a big noisy racket and they loved it. You know, we'd get the bus, go to the school and pick up A, go to the school and pick up B, C and bring them in. Yeah, we organised that as well, just to get them into the main building. No, the meetings were to keep, make sure that everybody was happy and everything was going well with whatever department that was.

Interviewer: Yeah. Would you say, was there anything that you would say was challenging at all with your time, during your time that you were involved? Anything at all that you would say kind of you felt was a bit challenging?

Interviewee: Well, probably when I was faced with 35 kids at Birdiehouse and I'd never worked with teenagers before and I went, Miss Marshall, what are you doing to me? But once I went in and I got, believe it or not, I had all these big boys sitting on the hall floor and girls and just said how it would run. The girls would do games, the boys would play football, the boys would play games and the girls would play games in the hall and then the last half hour was disco dancing and it went well but it was a challenge when I saw them all at the door because I'd never worked with teenagers before.

Interviewer: And was that when you said you were in your early 20s at that point?

Interviewee: I was only 24. It was a challenge, I can tell you, but, no hassle.

Interviewer: No?

Interviewee: No problems. I can't say there was any, any problems with any of the groups I ever had. Which was good. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's great.

Interviewee: I think being, not raising your voice and if, say, I would say, Derek, I don't want you to do that but if you want to do it, please don't come back next week but Derek was back. I'm just using a false name. No, the boy, no, and if my husband wasn't there, they would, some of the children would walk me to the bus stop.

Interviewer: Aw, make sure you got home all right. That's lovely, isn't it?

Interviewee: Isn't it? Yes. They were brilliant. I couldn't fault any of them. In fact, we used to go along and take, meet them on a Sunday and take them over the Pentland Hills. Oh, on a Sunday and what, and take them back. They enjoyed that.

Interviewer: Yeah. It does sound like it's been a really big part of your life.

Interviewee: Oh God, working with children, yes. Well, youth and children, yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that the organisation impacted your local community at the time? Like the work that you were doing, do you think?

Interviewee: Oh, I think so. It took the children off the street, especially the teenagers. Ah, I mean, there was gangs and everything in Glasgow. There must have been gangs here, but no and as I say, that one boy, I don't know why he was under the police, but the rest was okay.

Interviewee: Great.

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: We're nearly coming to the end. What do you, what impact do you feel that you achieved during your involvement, would you say, with the movement? Like, what do you think?

Interviewee: Well, I think I loved doing what I did. Met lovely people. What more do you ask for? Yeah. Lots of friends and, no, nothing but happiness. Yeah, we had a lot of friends.

Interviewer: Is there anything that you would want to see for the future of the movement now?

Interviewee: Well, since it's all changed and you're basing it on girls now, working with young people, yeah, I think that's important because some of these children that I was working with, their backgrounds weren't as good as a lot of children. Although I didn't see a lot of, what could I say, children hurt or anything, but there are children there who are needing just somebody to listen to them. I'm sad, you know, I heard on the radio, this wee boy, it was a teacher, this wee boy was picking up all the tomato things that you get to put on your meal at lunchtime, sachets and the teacher said, why are you picking those up? I make soup when I go home. See what I mean? And to listen to the young people, because maybe a lot of people are not even listening to them, and they just want somebody to tell them something. I think the most challenging thing is to be a good listener and a lot of people don't have time now, they're too busy with their phones. It's really sad. I'm always upset when I hear of children being hurt. My son even said that, mum you're still all worrying about children. I said, I know, because some of them have to go to school and they're hungry. I've just read that in the paper. This is the Edinburgh Evening News. They're not working at school because there's not any food inside them. Is that not sad? And my painter told me, he knew people, the children got shoes from the government and the parents sold them to get drug money or whatever it is. That's sad. Anything that upsets a child, I really get sad about it because I always seem to get the best out of children. Even the wee boy that lived next door. He was only two, he was a bit shy, but we got on well. He used to say, come and look for the birds. Have you seen any ladybirds? Have you seen butterflies? I hadn't seen them in a while and then he would come in and say, I saw a butterfly. It was lovely but they went and moved into their own house but I miss him because he was just coming in to chatting properly and things and he wasn't frightened of me, so that was good [laughing] and he liked the doorstep, you know, the doorstep at the door. So, when he went away to his new house, I gave him a doorstep because he asked what it was and he always said the clown, but I couldn't give him the clown because it wasn't child proof, if you know what I mean. I love young people. It makes all the difference. Just be a good listener, that is the main thing.

Interviewer: Yeah, I wondered as well, this is a question that we're asking everyone, and it's completely objective. It's just about your kind of involvement at the time, the period that you were involved with the YW, would you say that you were, that the organisation was feminist at all? Did you get that impression that it was driven by feminist sort of beliefs?

Interviewee: I wouldn't have thought so. Not with me working with teenagers and things.

Interviewer: No. Okay.

Interviewee: Everybody was welcome. Especially the drop-in coffee boy in the Birdiehouse. Because I gave up the teenagers when Gary, after Gary was born. Because I just didn't have the time. No. I wouldn't have thought so, no.

Interviewer: Okay. That's fine. Is there anything else that you'd like to share before we finish up? Anything that you, any other stories or bits that I've not, no?

Interviewee: Probably there's loads but I don't know what's on here but Gary's got it all. You can always ask me questions.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: The next time you come when I have the ladies.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: But it'll definitely be, have to be January.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: My life has been, ...Well that's the birdiehouse one but it was opening, helping to open all these things that was making money for the Y and now hostels for the girls. They don't even do that now. In George Street, the office was open and if you were a girl wanting accommodation, you would come to the Y and they would find your accommodation. Whether it was in a hostel but we had houses that took in young girls. You know, people who rented out a room or something long ago.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Where do the girls go now for accommodation? Don't know.

Interviewer: I know.

Interviewee: Because my granddaughter will be able to tell me because she's gone a way up to work in Inverness now and actually she's getting accommodation but normally she has to look for her own accommodation. In London I think she was sharing with paramedics because she's working in a hospital but this is what I mean. Girls used to be able to come to Edinburgh, come to the YW office and we would find them safe accommodation. That's gone as well, because the office was open till nine o'clock at night I think, if I remember right, and there was always somebody on duty, voluntary. Maybe nobody came but normally there was always somebody ringing at the door wanting accommodation. Yeah, it's gone, it's sad. I am sad that the state that it's gone down, if you know what I mean? Considering all the work that was being done when I was younger because I kept saying where was the YW and I was phoning up, no answer. Phoning Glasgow, no answer and it was Gary. I've got a computer but only use it for my family, where my husband was a computer consultant and travelled the world but I didn't have time for computers, I was always in the kitchen. Well Gary and my husband always was bringing, he always brought people home for meals and things, unannounced [laughing].

Interviewer: Well, thank you so much for sharing all your stories and I can take, yeah, thank you.