**Leonard Cheshire Resonate Podcast – Episode 3 Transcript**

Transcription Date: 15/03/2021

Start of Transcription

00:00: Music

00:05:Stephanie Nield: Hello and welcome to Leonard Cheshire Archive’s Resonate podcast. Thank you for tuning in. We hope you stick with us and enjoy this short series.

00:14: Music

00:19: My name is Stephanie. I am the archivist for disability charity, Leonard Cheshire. I look after the charity’s history at our Leonard Cheshire Archive Centre near Swadlincote, South Derbyshire.

00:32: The Resonate podcast is a three episode series about our Resonate project. Resonate is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Foyle Foundation. As part of the project, we are digitising our historic sound collection and running a digital volunteering programme.

00:50: We are coming towards the end of our project, so this episode will look back at what we have achieved, the impact of the pandemic and what to look out for online now our project has come to an end.

01:02: If you haven’t already, please do listen to episodes 1 and 2 of our podcast, to get an idea of what we have been doing so far.

**Section One - volunteering**

01:12: In February, the volunteering part of our project came to an end. This had an element of sadness as many volunteers had enjoyed their time listening to our founder, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire’s speeches, but they had also used the volunteering opportunity as a way of coping with the pandemic.

01:28:I took a few moments to chat with one of our volunteers, Jane.

01:33: Jane Selleck: My name is Jane Selleck and I heard about the opportunity through something called; it’s an email that I get each day called the Archives NRA Digest, and I saw the opportunity advertised on there, so that’s how I came to know about it.

01:53:SN: So, you started I think, right at the beginning of the project. We put the advert out I think around Christmastime, so it was just before the pandemic started.

02:06:JS: Yes. Actually, I don’t think I did start at the beginning as I think there was a bit of a hiatus and then I think Michael Ruddy contacted me to say that you had I think a space available or something, so I think maybe you’d got enough volunteers right at the very beginning and I think I came in a bit later actually.

02:31:SN: Oh, ok yes, I remember. We had to have a waiting list because we got inundated. We weren’t expecting to, but we got completely inundated and then we had a waiting list and then we opened it again, I think in the spring.

02:46: JS: Yes

02:47:SN: Tell me a little bit more. So, what were you expecting to be given?

02:52:JS: Oh gosh. I suppose I was expecting recordings but obviously I didn’t know what format they would take, what would be the main subjects discussed in them. So, it’s been an eye opener really and the variety of topics and things that have come up, so it’s been very instructive learning about Leonard Cheshire’s life and all the different facets to that and the kind of things he said, the kind of person he was. And then of course, we have had other things as well and other contributors like his wife, Sue Ryder. So yes, there has been quite a variety of material I would say, so that’s been very good.

04:01:SN: And what was the one thing that you will take away from it. What was the one thing that made you think, oh well you know I didn’t know that.

04:09:JS: Oh gosh [laughs] Obviously Leonard Cheshire had a deep faith and the way he talks about that has impressed itself upon me, I think. So yes, that has been one of the key things. And also, I was very interested in the lectures that he gave about things like when the use of force is justified. That seemed to be a recurring theme and so I was interested in as well as in his religious beliefs, I was interested in his philosophies as well. So yes, those are things that I’ll remember.

05:02: Obviously, the core thing about disability in its’ different forms, that’s clearly something that you can’t forget about. So, I haven’t just kept to one thing there, there are a few things, I think, yes.

05:25:SN: He was one of these people whom I think, through the fact that he was, he had lived through the times he’d lived through, and then he decided to do what he did after the war; he became this polymath. And I think that because he was quite publicly a devout Roman Catholic, he was asked these moral questions. I think he was quite a moral person, so that’s why he used to get…. we’ve got quite a few of the morality of force talks. He got asked to lecture on that to a lot of RAF colleges and things like that because I think around that time, what would it have been? He was talking about this in the 70’s and 80’s; so, you’ve got the run up to the Falklands War and I think before he died obviously in 1992, it was the Gulf War and we know he was thinking about that because we have got bits and bobs in the archives of him talking about it, thinking about it. So, I guess because he survived the Second World War and had been involved quite high up with strategy, he had some wisdom to impart.

06:34:SN: So how was it for you doing these transcriptions whilst the pandemic was going on?

06:39:JS: Well, I mean it was just great to have that focus really, of having something to do and also feeling that I was doing something worthwhile as well. As you know, the transcriptions weren’t always straight forward, they weren’t always easy [laughs] because you would get chunks of them where you couldn’t really tell what was being said, so that sometimes made it a bit difficult because you lost the thread of the subject matter. So, technically the recordings presented various challenges but that was all part and parcel of the fun, I suppose.[laughs]

07:32:SN: I think that you have to have that kind of mind where you want to solve the puzzle.

07:37:JS: Yes

07:40:SN: I do know what they’re saying, and I can work this out. Sometimes it’s impossible but I’ve been amazed by how dedicated all the volunteers have been, and they’ve relished challenges. Some the recordings we have are quite challenging because they’re bits of sound track that Leonards made in a film or they’re a voice notes made by one of his secretaries followed by a bit of a church service, as well as these more formal speeches. So, it has been a bit random, but we’ve transcribed nearly all of them. The ones that we haven’t transcribed are in languages that nobody in the volunteer group speaks.

08:26:JS: Oh right, yes.

08:27:SN: We’ve had some Polish translated, but we’ve got Mandarin and Arabic French.

08:37:JS: Oh right, my goodness. [chuckles]

08:39: SN: It sounds like Arabic and French. I can speak French, but it is not standard French, so they haven’t been translated but they’re like 1 or 2, the majority have been translated. I’m just amazed that you have all been so dedicated, so thank you.

8:59:JS:[chuckles] Ok.

9:00:SN: Now we’ve come to the end. What’s next?

9:06: JS: [laughs] Well, I’ve applied for various jobs and things. I am actually a qualified archivist myself and in fact I have an interview on Wednesday, so yes it would be good to get back into the workforce again. So that’s my hope.

9:32: Music

**Section Two - challenges**

09:37: SN: The pandemic has bought with it other challenges. A lot of the activities we had in our activity plan had to be cancelled or changed altogether and involved a lot of creative thinking.

09:48 By November 2020, when it seemed very likely our exhibition was not going ahead in the New Year, with the help of our colleagues at Leonard Cheshire, we held live Zoom webinar on Remembrance Day instead. We chose Remembrance Day because we had an emotive sound tape of the founder talking about what Remembrance Day meant to him. He was a war baby, born in 1917 when his father was away serving and came to adulthood as the Second World War began.

10:17: Leonard Cheshire: Today is Remembrance Sunday, the day on which the nightmare of world war and the dream of world peace, confront each other in the silence of our hearts. There, in the inner sanctuary of our being, and alone with our personal memories, we strengthen our resolve to make the dream more the reality and the nightmare more securely locked away in the prison of the past, but without lowering our guard against a possible future aggressor. As we prepare for this inner face to face, let us not forget that ours is a century which brought world war into being, and Europe the continent which twice unleashed it upon mankind.

11:13:SN: Both wars had a significant impact on him. This event was a great success for a first attempt, with nearly 100 attendees. You can view the recorded webinar on our website.

11:25 Music

11:30:SN: At the moment, we have no concrete plans to go ahead with our exhibition which had to be cancelled, but we are hoping that it will be held at the end of the year or during 2022 at the Brewhouse Arts Centre in Burton-on-Trent. Do follow us on our twitter account @archiveslc for updates.

11:49: In place of our exhibition, to mark the end of the project we have released a film showcasing some of our digital volunteers, talking about what they have learned from the transcription and podcasting work. This can be viewed on our website.

12:02:Music

**Section Three - Achievements**

12:07:SN: All together the volunteers contributed over 1000 hours of volunteering time and have transcribed over 240 of our sound tapes. I would like to thank them for their dedication and perseverance at a time when none of us really knew what the future held. The successful completion of transcribing our sound tapes is a real achievement.

12:29 Aside from this podcast, the final bit of work to complete is adding a selection of our digitised sound tapes to our website for people to view. This work is ongoing, and there are 16 recordings already available for you to listen to on our website. They are in captioned YouTube films, which have been checked and corrected by our volunteers, and I will be adding more over the next few weeks.

12:53: The tapes we have made available online are speeches by Group Leonard Cheshire and his wife Lady Sue Ryder, talking about their work towards an inclusive world for everyone.

13:04: Since Group Captain Cheshire offered his home in 1948 to a disabled man, unable to find a place to live, Leonard Cheshire has been supporting disabled people. In the UK and around the world, they work with partners to open doors to opportunity. They work hard to break down barriers that deny disabled people their basic rights.

13:23: Music

**Section Four - thank yous**

13:29:SN: I would like to take this opportunity to sat thank you to project officer Michael and our team of 27 wonderful digital volunteers. Due to the challenges of the pandemic, and having to shield myself, at various points I have not known if we could keep the project running and thanks to your dedication and enthusiasm, we have been able to achieve all our goals. Thank you. And hopefully when we can all meet again, we can do so and view our exhibition!

13:55 Finally, thank you to our funders, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Midlands and East, and the Foyle Foundation. Without you this wouldn’t have been possible, and now we have saved our sound collection for future generations to learn about our pioneering founder and the charity that bears his name.

14:12 You can explore the Archive’s digitised film and oral history collections on our website, which is www.rewind.leonardcheshire.org. We also have a Twitter page @archiveslc. Do follow us to find out more. Thank you for listening.

14:31: Music

14:36:Speech ends

14:37:Recording ends