

CHESHIRE

smile



Magazine of the Leonard Cheshire Homes Around the World — August 1987



Park House Hotel Opens – Story on centre pages



smile

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Cheshire Smile is published six times a year — on or about the first day of FEB/APR/JUN/AUG/OCT/DEC.

Contributions from readers are welcome and should be in the form of articles of not more than 500 words or letters not exceeding 200 words.

Contributions intended for a specified issue will be accepted provided that space is available. Such material must be received in the Editor's office at least TEN WEEKS preceding the publication date of the issue. The right is reserved to reject, shorten or clarify any material submitted at the discretion of the Editor whose decision is final, and no correspondence can be entered into concerning it.

Opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily reflect the official view of The Leonard Cheshire Foundation. Inquiries about advertising in Cheshire Smile should be addressed to John Anderson (Production Editor). See page 23.

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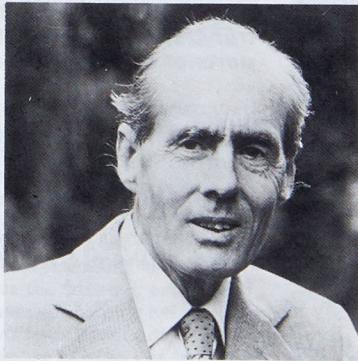
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Leonard Cheshire, VC, OM, DSO, DFC.

The Founder's 70th Birthday

Leonard Cheshire, V.C., the Founder and inspiration of all the Cheshire Homes throughout the world, will be 70 years old on September 7th 1987.

As a tribute to his humanitarian work a world wide Birthday Book is being compiled to include the names and, if possible the signatures, of residents, members of management committees and staff of every Home, Service and Project throughout the world, totalling well over 200. Borders of the pages will be decorated with paintings of flowers and sketches of local life from each Home.

A Birthday Appeal Fund has also been set up to raise money for the establishment of The Villa Troili, in Rome, for use initially as a holiday home for residents of Cheshire Homes and other disabled people. The cost of adapting the villa, once a convent, is estimated at £100,000, and the project is dear to the heart of the Founder and his wife, Baroness Ryder of Warsaw, who are most anxious to see the establishment of a Ryder Cheshire Home in Rome to extend the Foundation's work and provide an opportunity for many members of The Cheshire International Family to meet each other.

All the organisation and arrangements for the book and the fund are in the hands of Mr. Roland Langley, President of Greenacres Cheshire Home, Sutton Coldfield, who is also a Founder Member of the Home's Management Committee.

A Simple Guide to Special Transport Facilities

Special transport facilities for disabled people do exist – the London Taxicard Scheme, cabs specially converted to take wheelchairs, Dial-A-Ride – but confusion reigns on how to go about getting these services.

In a consumer study of public transport for handicapped people in Greater London, by GLAD (Greater London Association for Disabled People), it was revealed that of those questioned 63% had never heard of the Taxicard Scheme, 19% were unsure if they were entitled, 25% did not know how to apply for a card, while only 6% had a card. In the case of Dial-A-Ride, 61% had not heard of the scheme and 9% were unsure if they were entitled.

The London Taxicard Scheme

Here, then, are the facts unravelled: If you are in receipt of a) a mobility allowance, b) registered blind, or c) have a war pensioner's mobility allowance, you are eligible. First you must fill up a London Taxicard Scheme form, obtainable from any Post Office, and provide two photographs, proof of residence in London, and evidence of eligibility (i.e. your allowance book). The cost of photo-booth snaps will be refunded when you hand in your completed application.

London Regional Transport (Commercial Section) will then issue you with your Taxicard, together with full details of the scheme.

How it Works

This will list the radio taxi companies operating the scheme. All you have to do then is to phone and book the taxi shortly before you wish to make a journey. But remember the scheme is not available to visitors or temporary residents.

The Cost

For journeys clocking up to £6 on the meter, you will only have to pay £1 (up to approximately 7 miles). For longer journeys, over £6, you will have to pay the full cost, less the cost of the first 7 miles.

Dial-A-Ride

There are now over 120 Dial-A-Rides up and down the country. Although individual services differ, Dial-A-Ride usually means just what it says: in principle you can expect to be able to telephone to book a ride to anywhere within reason. Dial-A-Rides usually aim to help people with shorter trips – to the pub, shopping, visiting friends – eyebrows may be raised if you want to spend a day in the Highlands! Most Dial-A-Rides, of course, can easily take wheelchairs.

If you want to find out whether there is a Dial-A-Ride in your area (or one in an area you are visiting, and whether you are eligible to use it), first points of call are the Local Library, the Town Hall and the Citizens' Advice Bureau (listed under "Libraries", the name of your local authority and "Citizen" in the phone book).

If you don't have a phone you can write to any of these – you can find the addresses by borrowing a phone book, a local guide or by persuading a friend to do the legwork.

If all else fails, you can find out through DIAL – local groups of people with disabilities who run excellent local information services. Disablement Information Action Line – DIAL UK, 117 High Street, Clay Cross, Chesterfield, Derbyshire – Tel: (0246) 864498

will tell you if there is a branch near you. And through

The National Advisory Unit for Community Transport
Keymer Street, Beswick, Manchester,
M11 3FY –
Tel: (061) 273 6038.

Different Dial-A-Rides have different rules about who is eligible to use the service. You may have to be getting mobility allowance or supplementary benefit or just not be able to travel in any other way. The only way you can find out is to phone or write to the Dial-A-Ride itself. Don't hesitate to talk about any transport problem you have to them. Dial-A-Ride staff are always helpful and very informal; even if you are not officially eligible for a ride, you may find that they can help you out in some way.

P.S. Most Dial-A-Rides accept booking by telephone. If you don't have a telephone, need one and are disabled, then contact the Social Services at your Local Authority. They may be able to arrange to have one installed and may help out with the installation costs and standing charges too. If you need special equipment to help you use the telephone, the Social Services should be able to help with this too.

P.P.S. If there is no Dial-A-Ride in your area, you will appreciate important they are. So our last piece of advice is – consider starting one yourself.

ERICA (European Research into Consumer Affairs) recently published a book "How to start a Dial-A-Ride" obtainable from: ERICA, 8 Lloyd Square, London, WC1X 9BA for £5.50 (+40p postage and packing).

SPECIALLY CONVERTED CABS

There are now 60 cabs converted to take passengers in wheelchairs without any need to transfer them, located in various parts of England.

**For a list of taxi owners or taxi companies with a converted cab on the road, write to:
Mr J Everitt, London Taxis International, 60 Carnwath Road, Fulham, SW6. Tel: 01 731 1341.**

'PAT' DOGS

can bring pleasure to disabled people



Mr Mike Bateman (right) with his wife Hilarie, (centre) introduce their PAT dogs to Roecliffe Manor residents, left to right George Walker, Lydia Matthews and Barbara Yates

Medical studies have shown that pets can often break through barriers of depression and loneliness sometimes suffered by disabled and elderly people far more easily than human beings, bringing happiness and interest into their lives.

The best solution, of course, would be if those entering residential homes were able to bring their own animals with them, but this is clearly quite impracticable.

However, now a national charity called **PRO dogs** has come up with a solution, with a rapidly growing nationwide scheme called **PAT Dog Visiting**. It began in 1983 after a successful pilot scheme in Derbyshire in 1983, and has now extended to Bedford, Devon, Essex, London, Merseyside, Oxford, Sheffield, Stafford, Scotland, West Midlands and Leicestershire.

Volunteers, all of whom are members of PRO Dogs, offer to take their dogs on regular visits to residential homes, hospitals, nursing homes – wherever they are welcome, in fact. To be accepted as a registered PAT dog, and wear a special disc on his collar, a dog must pass a temperament test and be shown to have the friendly, extrovert personality needed to enjoy being made a fuss of by many different people. Dogs in the scheme are certified as healthy and vaccinated by veterinary surgeons.

There are now 2500 dogs in operation in the visiting scheme. So far golden retrievers top the list in numbers, but there also many other breeds, including Irish wolfhounds, Bernese mountain dogs, English setters, German shepherd dogs, Dalmatians, Border collies and even a tiny Chihuahua, not to mention a good assortment of friendly old mongrels!

The Founder of the charity, Mrs Lesley Scott Ordish, explained the benefits to me: "A dog can act as an ice-breaker to a lonely, depressed or withdrawn person. No need for words. The resident can just reach out to him, stroke him and admire him, and receive his unquestioning contact and affection. The dog owners come second, but of course the mutual interest in the animal soon creates a link and a talking point. They can discuss his funny ways, what he eats, ways of grooming him, and generally build a bridge of interest. We find, too, that when children accompany their parents with their dog, this again gives great pleasure.

VOLUNTEERS VISIT REGULARLY

"All volunteers undertake to visit regularly and this is essential as a real relationship with the dog cannot otherwise be built up. We've also found that PAT dog visits are enormously appreciated by mentally handicapped people who so often miss loving relationships and lack stimulation. A dog is so unquestioning and accepting." PAT dogs also bring benefits for staff caring for handicapped or elderly people because it leaves their charges so much more relaxed and happier in themselves.

EVENING VISITS

Mrs Scott Ordish told me that Nurse Advisers of the Royal College of Nursing are very much in favour of the scheme as they realise that touching and playing relating to animals helps to care for, cure and console people. "And morale, as we all know, is quite as important in treatment as physical medication. We have even been asked to provide evening visits with dogs because it helps disabled people or patients to relax and sleep better without resorting to drugs."

All kinds of touching stories have been received by PAT Dogs – from the old lady who just holds out her arms to the dog each time it visits her and when it covers her face with kisses simply sobs with joy, to the disabled man who is cheerful and alert on the day scheduled for a visit from the dog, where before he was morose and grumpy.

The Leicester Co-ordinator of PAT, Mr Mike Bateman, regularly visits Roecliffe Manor Cheshire Home in Woodhouse Eaves, with his wife Hilarie and their dogs Blasket and Moss. "The residents love to see them and the dogs certainly enjoy their visits, particularly because they know there is a tin of digestive biscuits waiting for them", he told me. Head of Home Joan Jayes agrees that dogs' visits bring residents great pleasure and interest.

Some Cheshire Homes, however, are not in need of PAT dog visits as they have their own menageries. Tony Lowton, Head of Home at Mote House in Maidstone, tells me they have rabbits, two parakeets and two much spoiled cats in permanent residence. In addition Tony often brings his golden cocker spaniel Prince to work, and members of staff Denise Morgan and Pat Angus also bring dogs. This regular contact is much valued by residents, some of whom have had the sad experience of having to leave their own loved animals.

Homes requiring a visit from a PAT dog should contact:
PRO dogs, Rocky Bank, 4 New Road, Ditton, MAIDSTONE, ME20 6AD
Tel: West Malling 848499
who will make the necessary arrangements.
Volunteers willing to visit with their dogs are urgently required and should contact the same address.

SHARE YOUR PROBLEMS

with Sue Langdown

Send your problems to:
Sue Langdown,
C/O Cheshire Smile, Arnold
House, 66 The Ridgeway,
ENFIELD, EN2 8JA
All correspondance will be
treated as completely
confidential.

Correspondents will not be named unless they wish to be. Although replies to letters not selected for publication cannot be answered by her personally, she will refer these to the appropriate Care Adviser IF SO REQUIRED.



Question: One of the Residents in our Home is systematically stealing from other Residents, usually small amounts of money or sweets, but sometimes larger items. Nobody has been caught, but we are pretty certain who it is. We are reluctant to call in the Police; what can we do?

Answer: I am assuming that you have taken the Head of Home fully into your confidence, and that by "we", you are referring either to a small group of Residents or a Resident Committee. This is, I know, a very worrying problem, which unfortunately seems to occur in many places where people live communally. Sometimes it can be resolved by the Head of Home, or someone else within the Home, speaking to the person suspected. If this does not stop the problem, your Head of Home may like to consider asking the local Crime Prevention Officer to visit the Home to talk to all Residents and Staff, amongst other things, about how everybody can protect their Home and personal belongings. Such talks are in themselves very interesting, and usually have the desired effect of putting off a casual petty thief. If the problem is more serious, then it may be that your Head of Home will have no option but to ask the Police for help. However, even this intervention need not be too upsetting, as the Police can offer a number of solutions for actually identifying the person or persons concerned, thereby enabling the Home's management to take whatever action it deems appropriate.

On a general note, do draw the attention of your Management Committee to the need to have a lockable drawer or cupboard in your room, as well as the facility to lock your bedroom door when you are not there.

Question: I would like to manage my own financial affairs, pension, etc., by paying the Home direct, perhaps on the production of an invoice or by standing order, rather than have the Home deal with everything and give me my pocket money. How can I do this?

Answer: There is no reason why you should not manage your own financial affairs. Indeed, Residents are encouraged to do this both by The Leonard Cheshire Foundation and by Local Registering Authorities.

Do discuss with your Head of Home how best this might be achieved in your particular case, having in mind local facilities and their availability to you. One suggestion you may wish to consider is to have a bank account into which your pensions, etc. may be paid direct. A standing order or direct debit arrangement would take care of the Home's and other regular charges.

I have consulted with two of the major High Street Banks, and am advised that Bank Managers will be pleased to offer, free of charge, personal advice on opening an account to any disabled person, including a Home visit if necessary.

Signatures are of course essential to open the bank account and this may be a problem for some people. If you are unable to sign or make a mark you will need to appoint somebody to sign cheques on your behalf, giving them the Power of Attorney. For this you will need a Solicitor (free, using the Green Form Scheme) and a Doctor as witnesses.

Question: I have heard mention of a new Disabled Persons Act 1986, but cannot find out any details. Can you please explain what it is and how I might obtain further details about its likely effect?

Answer: I think you are referring to the Disabled Persons (Services, Consultation and Representation) Act 1986.

This Act arose from a Private Member's Bill, introduced by Tom Clarke M.P. in December 1985.

There are a number of sections dealing with services provided by Local Authorities, Consultations, and Representation, for physically disabled people and those suffering from a mental disorder or mental illness. In practice, the Act will seek to enable a disabled person to appoint another individual as their representative to act with or on their behalf in their dealings with a Local Authority.

It must be noted that no dates have yet been set for implementation of much of this Act. Only one section (dealing with young people leaving full-time education) has been

brought into force so far. Further sections (relating to assessment by Local Authorities) came into force in April 1987.

Much will depend on the co-operation of voluntary organisations, particularly in determining the speed at which certain sections can be introduced.

Copies of the Act are available from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, price £3.40. A very digestible handbook has also been produced jointly by MIND and RADAR, specially for voluntary organisations.

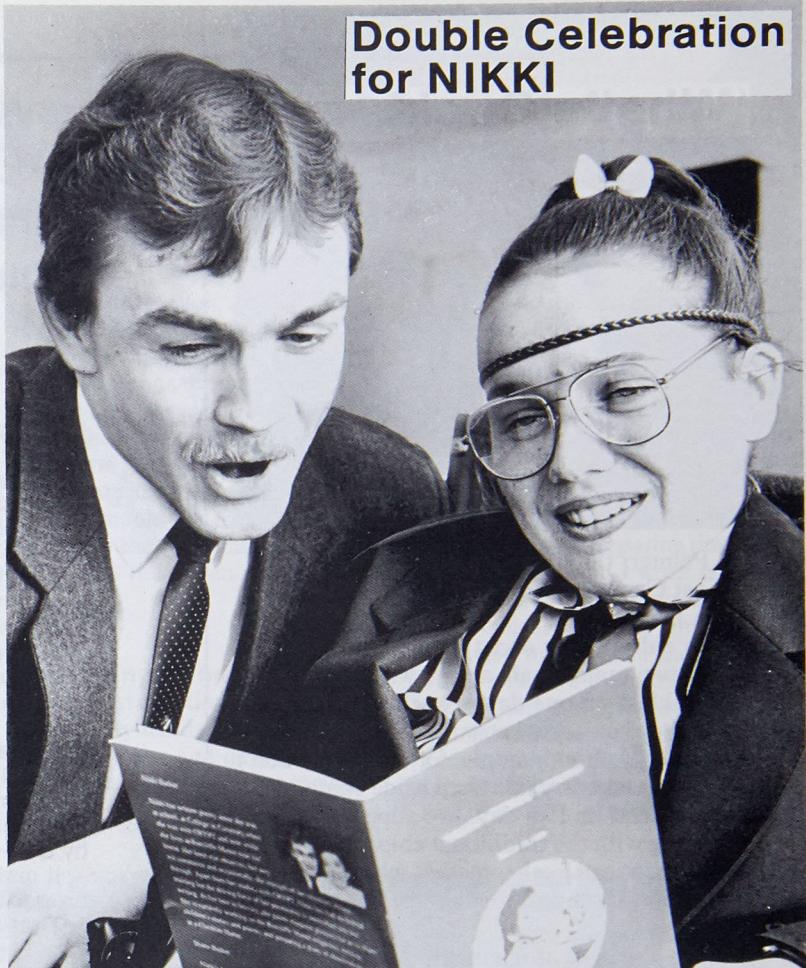
Information from:
MIND, 22 Harley Street, London W1N 2ED Telephone: 01-637 0741; or
RADAR, 25 Mortimer Street, London WIN 8AB Telephone 01-637 5400.

Question: I want to change my G.P., who is also the Home's Doctor, but I have been told that this is not possible.

Answer: Most of us at different times in our lives consider changing our General Practitioner, sometimes because we move home, and other times because we feel that a particular G.P. may be unsympathetic or we just don't get on! If this is the case for you, do try to discuss the situation with your G.P. before taking any action. If you still want to change, you may ask another Doctor in the same practice to see you (this may not always entail actually changing your named G.P.), or you may approach a G.P. in another practice, or make an application to the local Family Practitioners' Committee.

There are problems of course, particularly if there is only one local practice, or if your G.P. has made an informal or even more formal arrangement with the Home to prove a wider range of service.

However, the patient/doctor relationship is a very personal one, and if you do feel that you want to change and yet are frustrated in this aim, do discuss with your Home's Head of Care or Head of Home, alternatively your Home's link Care Adviser, or your local Citizen's Advice Bureau will advise on what other action can be taken.



Nikki Barker with her brother Shane, who illustrated Kaleidoscope Dreams. (Photo courtesy of Leicester Mercury)

Friday, April 10th, was a red letter day for Nikki Barker, a resident of Roecliffe Manor, Woodhouse Eaves, Notts.

It was her 23rd birthday and coincided with the publication of her second volume of poems, "Kaleidoscope Dreams".

The occasion was celebrated with a wonderful party and two birthday cakes. Nikki, a charming figure in a black and white costume, greeted her guests from her wheelchair with quiet composure, and signed copies of her book.

Surrounded by her family and friends, the day compensated for her 21st anniversary which she spent in an intensive care unit, and for the many months she has been confined to bed almost permanently.

In his foreword to her poems, Loenard Cheshire writes: "The ability to give eloquent expression to deep emotions and to our innermost feelings is not granted to many of us."

Double Celebration for NIKKI

"The poems in this book confirm that Nikki Barker possesses these rare gifts and she brings insight, maturity and sensitivity in the use of words to her creative task . . ."

The charming illustrations are by Nikki's brother Shane.

In a moving poem dedicated to her dead brother Neil, Nikki writes:

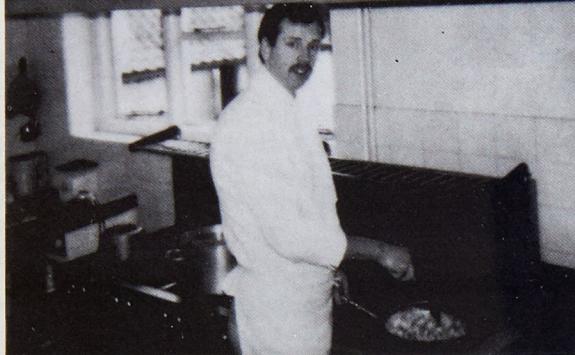
"You live within our hearts
I know as I feel you there
You taught me much
Although you didn't know
Half of me is living for you
Together I know we'll see the
fight through."

And the final poem in the book "Afterglow":

Candle burning
Slow descending
The afterglow
Never ending."

Kaleidoscope Dreams is edited by Val Fethney.
Published by and obtainable from Gavarnie, 41 Legion Way, East Wittering, West Sussex.
Price £2.30 (incl. p.p.).

'What's Cooking?'



Richard Palmer, the Chef at The Grove Cheshire Home, East Carleton, Norfolk, here describes what goes on in his kitchen:

"We are catering for about thirty residents, turning out two main meals a day, with an optional cooked breakfast on one day a week.

"After a time you get to know individual tastes and cater accordingly. For example, for those who don't like or cannot eat pastry, we keep aside some of the meat or fruit, and on fish days we supply creamed potatoes along with the traditional chips. Or there is always cold meat and fresh tomatoes when in season. An attractive chicken salad is another popular choice.

"We have a weight problem with most residents, and try to combat it with semi-skimmed milk, and skimmed milk for those on special diets. I use Canderel Spoonful instead of sugar - milk puddings, sauces and custard have either sugar or sweetener, depending on diet or choice.

"St. Ivel Gold for bread, crackers, etc., and Vitalite in the cooking of cakes and pastry. Wholemeal flour alongside the white variety; whilst the former turns out looking less attractive in pastry, it is more nutritious, and we use three parts white to one of brown.

"Our suppers tend to complement the main meal not as substantial. Bacon and tomatoes or mushrooms, baked potatoes, cheese dishes, followed by whips, ice-cream. Fresh fruit is always available as an alternative. Drinks, beverages and squashes, so essential to those in wheelchairs, are always to hand."

A typical menu at The Grove:

LUNCH

Chicken Somerset or Chicken Supreme
Potatoes & two veg with rice
or Chicken Salad

Peach & almond whip or Fresh fruit

SUPPER

Leek-tomato-potato pie or Cold meat and tomatoes
Cheese Board
Jelly or fresh fruit

Is the Orange Badge Scheme for Disabled Motorists abused?

The Department of Transport is at present analysing responses from disability organisations to its discussion paper urging changes to the Orange Badge car parking scheme for disabled drivers because of its 'abuse'.

When this is complete, conclusions will again be circulated for comment before firm proposals are submitted by the Minister.

In its response, RADAR (Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation) has called for radical reform, noting that much of the abuse of the orange badge is by able-bodied people.

It makes the following proposals:

1. That the issuing of badges should be monitored much more closely and the eligibility criteria restricted to those in receipt of Mobility Allowance or who are unable or virtually unable to walk.
2. That it should be an offence for an orange badge to be shown on a vehicle not being used by the person to whom it was issued - this would make it illegal to leave the badge on the family car when the disabled member was not in it.
3. That a special, separate document should be issued to the Orange Badge Holder containing the serial number and details of the holder, including a photograph.
4. That the two-hour parking limit for badge holders be abolished and the orange badge scheme recognised in Central London.
5. That disabled parking spaces should be marked more clearly and police instructed to take action against able-bodied motorists parking in these spaces.

See Readers' Letters for comments on page 21.

Delivering the Goods at DOUGLAS HOUSE

Douglas House in Brixham, South Devon, is renowned, not only for the number of prizes its residents win each year in the Foundations' Creativity Activity Contest, but also for the astonishing volume and originality of the work submitted. Nine awards in 1986, for example, and Winner of the Home Cup for two years running.

There are 30 residents and four day attenders, all severely handicapped and in a wide age range, so they start with no special advantages.

How is this active participation achieved?

Joan Hutchinson, social therapist at the Home for ten years, explains her approach. A mature art student, she is an intensely creative person, but modestly says she only possesses a "rag-bag" of minor, simple skills, which she feels are sometimes more useful than excellence in a few crafts, as they enable her to adapt more readily to the individual needs and difficulties of residents.

How Many Hands?

"My first question always must be 'How many hands have we got?' Of those residents and day attenders who work with Joan on a regular basis only two have effective hand

control, and the rest either have very weak arms, the use or partial use of one hand, or no hand control at all.

"Everything we do has to be geared to the reality of this. My job was for twelve hours a week", Joan explained, "And I realised almost at once that if I was to be effective, three of those hours had to be spent in planning and preparing the project and the materials. I work on a one-to-one basis with the residents who require most help. My aim is always to devise work within their scope which will give them personal satisfaction and pleasurable remembrance and represent perhaps a pinnacle of their achievement. I feel these aims are justifiable and in no way patronising."



Joan Hutchinson with the residents, and their work. Left to right David Johnson, Marion Saunders, Len Hellier, Felicity Duder and Margaret Peirce.



Examples of dishes, trays and boxes decorated by residents.

Pleasing to the Eye

"The object made must be exciting and pleasing to the eye. I remember so well as a schoolchild being given a piece of grey calico and made to do lines of different stitching. When finished, these had to be unpicked and replaced by further lines, while the calico got dirtier and dirtier. Depressing! Boredom must be avoided at all costs."

Interesting Materials

"One secret of success is the variety of interesting materials I hoard, which are stacked in every conceivable corner of my house. I go beachcombing for interesting pebbles and stones, and broken bits of attractive china washed up on Dawlish beach after storms. I go to auctions and jumble sales to buy up old mirrors, picture frames, odd plates, bits of materials, magazines and picture books. It all costs very little – never more than £35 in a year.

"Then I'll discuss with the residents what they would like to do. I might show them some picture postcards which could be adapted to make a design for a collage. If they like the idea, we'll discuss the materials they will need and I'll go away and get it together, rather like a kit. Then I'll do a rough sketch which they will cut out. From them on, they get to work, sticking and designing the collage."

Reviving Victorian Art Forms

"I've revived the art of Victorian scrapwork and shell work, and of decorating furniture, mirrors and screens with attractive montages of pictures. We also cover old plates with mosaics, interesting patterns, or Victorian cut-out colour pictures. Sticking plays a very large part in these arts because this is something that people with very little hand control can manage, and I have devised a special glue dispenser.

"What they are doing has to be enjoyed. Gradually they begin to see something pretty and pleasing emerge – something they can be really proud of either to keep or give as a present.

"The same approach applies to interestingly shaped tins or boxes which can be covered and decorated with shells, old beads and scraps of exotic materials.

"Original lacemaking is mostly too difficult for them, but we compromise. We create lacework pictures from old lace curtains and lace doilies, or cut out and dye lace motifs.

"Everything completed is sent to the contest. If a resident has been too greatly aided we send it 'for display only'. In this way all residents are involved and get satisfaction. It also ensures that however minimal, they

are a part of the activities going on and consequently stimulated."

A few residents, Joan explained, are highly talented, and present no problem as they work at their interests on their own. Examples are Marion Saunders, (Day Care), Mary Stiling and Susan James, all keen writers, and David Johnson, an outstandingly good nature photographer.

Creative Thinking

There remain a few residents with scarcely any movement or hand control, and for these Joan has devised a remarkable and on-going method of stimulation by means of 'creative thinking' with herself as the recorder of the stories and imaginative ideas she encourages them to express. This is a technique that requires a very special insight and perception, which will be explained by Joan in an article in the next issue.

Sadly, Joan Hutchinson is leaving the area, but her place has been taken by Aileen Mitchell, a trained occupational therapist, who says that she plans to carry on the work using the same approaches.

Crafts, however, are not the only opportunities offered to residents at Douglas House. See facing page.



Tom Fallon, Head of Home, Douglas House, with Sheila Andrews, Head of Care.

United Objectives at DOUGLAS HOUSE

Douglas House buzzes with activity and a breezy optimism. It takes a team of dedicated people to create this spontaneous atmosphere and there is little doubt that the Management Committee, under the Chairmanship of Gordon Wroe, Head of Home, staff and volunteers alike are all united in their determination to do everything in their power to 'enable' the residents to live as near to normal and productive lives as possible.

Tom Fallon, Head of Home, ably assisted by Sheila Andrews, his Deputy and Head of Care, orchestrates the efforts, and both show a rare though intensely practical understanding of disablement in everything they do.

Tom's management skills, acquired in his previous career with a big insurance company, are all important in running the Home and he is particularly concerned with budgetary control. "Budgeting is crucial" he says, "because we must have the resources to get on with the job of giving our residents the fullest possibility of independence. For

example, we have a full-time electronics engineer here and a tool maker. This is invaluable in sorting out specific mobility and posture problems by means of equipment adaptation.

"Everything we do is designed to create maximum opportunities. We've now got a computer room and a full-time computer officer devising interesting programmes, while six residents have got their own machines for their own activities."

Resident David Cartwright, for example, operates his at remarkable speed by means of his chin, enabling him to undertake a heavy load of responsibilities, both for the Home and in fund raising activities for other organisations. Sheila Goldie finds her computer invaluable, too, for her Open University course and her work as secretary for the local Green Party.

Tom makes several things clear. The dignity, privacy and wishes of the residents are paramount, and although participation is encouraged it is never forced. "We involve the residents fully in all decision-making at every level," he said, "They are

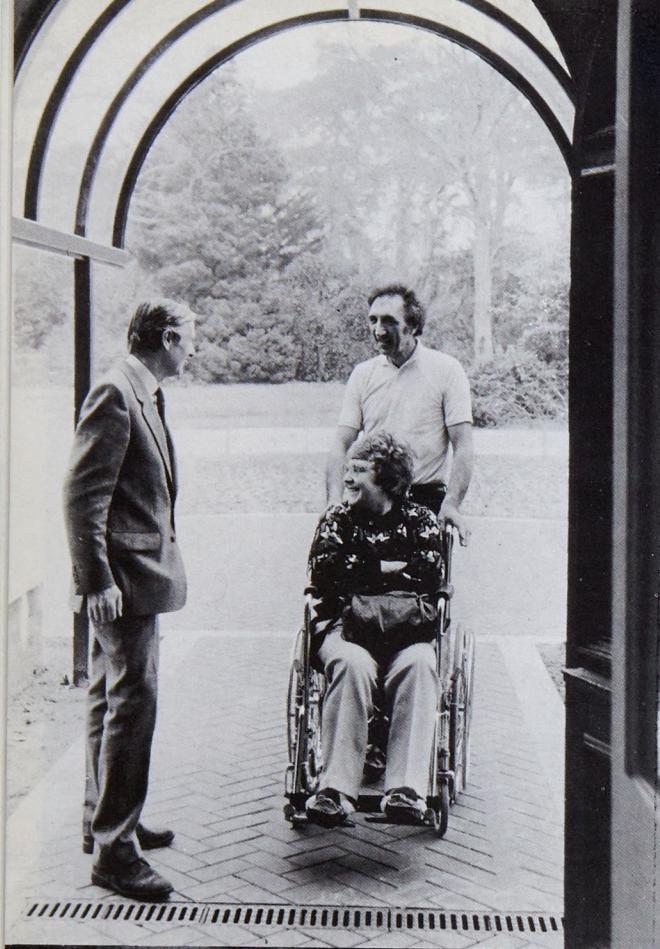
represented on the management committee and we also have a weekly get-together to exchange plans and views.

"All members of part-time or full-time staff are always hired on a three months probationary basis. We have to be certain that they have the right attitudes, and the interviews before they are taken on are pretty exhaustive, I can tell you."

Activities of all kinds are organised by mutual agreement – from Morris dancing exhibitions, local amateur dramatics, the Home's own cabaret shows, to visits to theatres, art galleries and museums.

Disablement is not allowed to inhibit cherished plans and distance is no object, wheelchairs or no wheelchairs. A party had just returned from a trip to London to see the ballet at Covent Garden – up and back in a day, with a picnic in the bus and bed at 1.30 a.m. "Wasn't it a bit exhausting for the residents?" I asked. "Bless you, they're always game for a bit of adventure" says Tom. That's the kind of place Douglas House is.

The Queen of Park House



On Friday, July 31st, The Queen, who is Patron of The Leonard Cheshire Foundation, made the short journey from Sandringham House to officially open Park House on the Royal Estate, as a country house hotel for 26 physically disabled people, a unique venture for the Foundation.

Park House was the birthplace and childhood home of The Princess of Wales, and had stood empty for some years. The use of it was offered to the Foundation by the Queen in 1983. After much careful thought, it was decided to turn it into a hotel where a really comfortable holiday could be enjoyed by disabled people, not only from Cheshire Homes, but from all parts of the UK and overseas. Since then intensive fund raising and meticulous planning have been in progress. The final figure for the cost of converting and equipping the house to very high standards was £1,500,000, all of which has been raised by donations from many hundreds of supporters, including an outstanding contribution of £250,000 from The Sultan of Brunei. However fund raising is still essential to cover heavy running cost.

Throughout the planning period, the Queen has taken a deep personal interest in the plans and construction work. Her last unofficial visit, shortly before furnishing began, lasted an hour, at the end of which she expressed her warm approval. Accompanied by six Royal Corgis, the Queen's interest in her tour was so great that she did not immediately notice that two of her dogs were missing - later discovered in a bathroom, into which they had inadvertently been shut! Princess Diana has also been over to view the changes to her old home.

Inquiries and reservations to: The Manager Park House Hotel, Sandringham, Norfolk PE36 0RN, England.



(Top left)

Brenda Wyer, with husband Derek, are greeted on arrival by General Manager Tony Kendall.

(Bottom left)

A guest signs in for receptionist Madeleine Coughlan.

Park House Hotel now offers total accessibility for wheelchairs and incorporates design features and a large range of equipment to suit widely differing disabilities, including deafness and blindness. It sets a new standard in the provision of much-needed holiday accommodation for those with special needs. Prices are competitive and equate with those of a three-star hotel, though many guests should be able to receive assistance from Social Services, charitable organisations and other sponsors to meet the costs of a stay there. Although 24-hour care is provided by a fully qualified staff, guests can come accompanied by their own carers or companions. The hotel offers the alternatives of bed and breakfast, half or full board for any period between one night and one month.

Set in five acres of glorious parkland, it overlooks the cricket ground. Regular excursions to places of interest are on offer in the hotel's two minibuses, and during the winter special activity weeks will be organised for popular pastimes such as photography, birdwatching and music.

The hotel opened on April 1st and the first 'trial' guests moved in shortly before, all primed to act as 'guinea pigs' to expose any teething troubles.

Kay Christiansen, the Editor of Cheshire Smile, was there too, and below describes her stay:

"Up a sweeping gravel drive, to the smart, glass-covered entrance, through an automatic door, and into the reception area with its great fireplace.

opens Hotel

Full illustrated coverage
of the Royal Opening in
our next issue (October).

"Opposite is the small library and next to it the elegantly proportioned drawing room, furnished in subtle shades of cream, pale beige, with touches of apricot velvet upholstery. Beautiful bowls of fresh flowers adorn the shelves. From the long windows there are views over the grounds and terraces where, amid the trees and shrubs, The Queen's exotic pheasants wander at leisure among clumps of daffodils and other spring flowers.

"The old stables have been covered in to provide a splendid leisure area for carpet bowls, table tennis and other games. Philip Hay, the Catering Manager, late of Douglas House, and once a member of the crew of the Royal Yacht 'Britannia', is keenly looking forward to summer, foreseeeing what a delightful setting this would be for buffet lunches.

"Further down the carpeted corridor to the low-ceilinged dining room, with windows running the entire width of one wall. Furnished in modern style, with enlarged photographs depicting Royal Transport through the years, there is a well-stocked bar and bar area on one side. Tables are impeccably laid with spotless linen, gleaming glass and cutlery, the whole representing a charming and intimate place to dine.

"Attractive Norfolk waitresses in uniforms of cream with brightly patterned frilly aprons serve you with professional skill. The food I had was delicious. Here is a typical menu:
Choice of sea food vol-au-vent; Avocado pear; Tuna and sweetcorn tartlet; Coq au vin; Sole Veronique; Lamb cutlets with Madeira sauce. All vegetables were fresh. A selection of tempting sweets from the dessert trolley is followed by the cheeseboard and coffee.

"Replete, you may then take the large lift to your room. Bedrooms repeat the cool, under-stated colour themes and are very comfortable. Each has an en-suite shower or bath, with television, radio, telephone and a battery of bells.

"I was particularly impressed with the unobtrusiveness of the small army of Care Assistants who are supervised by Eileen Laing, the House Manager, and a highly experienced trained nurse. Always there to help or in an emergency, they are never so much in the forefront to create a 'nursing home' atmosphere and have been well drilled in understanding that these are holidaymakers. They mingle delightfully with the guests when invited and sit at meal times to help those with hand manipulation problems, although hardly noticeable.

"In other words, from Day One, it seems that Park House has firmly established itself as the first and foremost a hotel where disability is catered for twenty four hours a day, but not aggressively.

"Guests I spoke to included Edith Watkinson and Florence Dando from Champion House, Pam Mowatt and Phyllis Young from Le Court, Ann Macdermott and Jo Lindley from Stonecroft, Ann Adams and Maureen Downes from St Cecilia's, Robin Thom and Ethel Dick from Cotswold, Rosa Searle and Gwen Owen from Heatherley. All were unanimous in their verdict: 'Park House is smashing.'

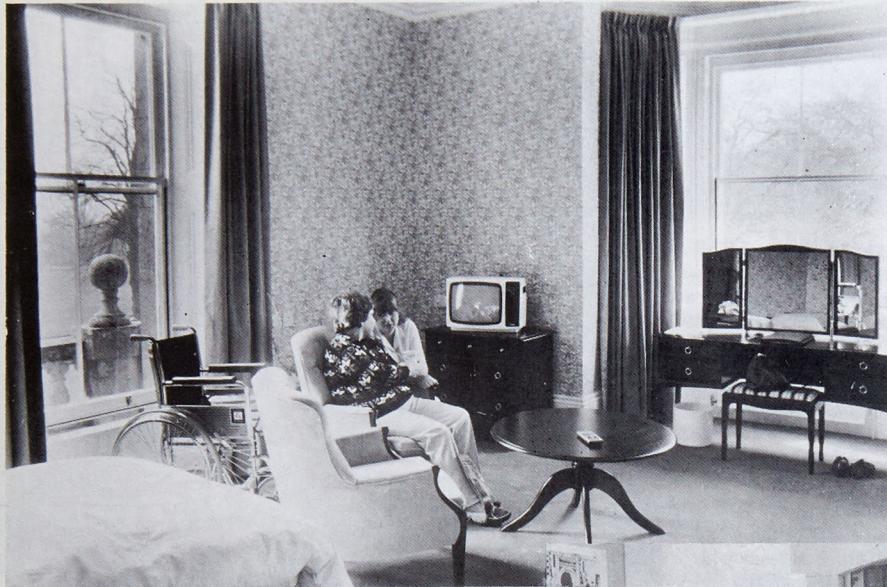
"General Manager Tony Kendall, an Ex-Brigadier, pronounced himself more cautiously as pleased with the way things were going. There are a few details that need to be sorted out, but as a team we are all delighted that our first guests have given us the thumbs up", he said.

Dersingham, King's Lynn PE35 6EH (Tel. Dersingham 0485) 43000

(Top Right) Waitresses Linda and Kelly Bennett serving a buffet lunch.

(Bottom Right) Edith Watkinson of Champion House enjoys a quiet read in the library with a glorious view





PARK HOUSE HOTEL

▲ Brenda Wyer, with Care Assistant Marilyn Henshaw, in her spacious bedroom.

► Pam Mowatt enjoys a drink at the well stocked bar.

(At far left) Sir Edmund Grove, Honorary Treasurer of The Park House Management Committee, chatting with guests at coffee time.
▼



THE LEONARD CHESHIRE FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

LEONARD CHESHIRE HOUSE

26-29 MAUNSEL STREET LONDON SW1P 2QN ENGLAND



International News

Edited by Lynette Learoyd
Secretary to International Director
Ronald Travers



BRAZIL

Dr Hua Jung Ho is a Chinese-Brazilian dentist who treats the residents of Lar Sao Jose do Jaguare, the Sao Paulo Home, free of charge and in particular Josino Guedes and Benedito Matias Sebastiao have been under her hands for many many hours! On April 11 Dr Hua married David Fletcher at an English-speaking Church, in Sao Paulo, and seven of the residents attended the wedding.

On the following day the men from the Home were taken to a football game in Morumbi stadium (one of the largest in the world) by the Stimsonsons and the Kenricks, volunteers who have been involved with the Home, and who are now leaving Brazil.

The Home receives no welfare assistance at all, and therefore relies very heavily on voluntary assistance of all kinds. A bazar de Sao Jose on March 14 was a great success, when an estimated 400-500 men, women, children and dogs from the favela across the street crowded into the main hall of the Home with hardly space to pick out clothes! After two hours frantic activity the sale netted \$8,000 to go towards food and utilities. Leftovers were donated to the Parish of Sao Jose Operario for their church bazaar later this month.

The residents are pressing for action in construction of an alley at one side of the project – this has been approved on the city maps. Once this is completed, it will facilitate closure by a wall on that side of the lot, thus providing much-needed security at the Home. An equally needed pay phone is still awaited, and has now been promised for September.

His Majesty the King opened the Home formally at 5pm, after which everyone enjoyed the feast of a bullock and two sheep, provided by one of the Chiefs.

The New Home is bright and cheerfully decorated on a site donated by one of the Chiefs, and we wish it every success.

LESOTHO

Lady Troughton, a member of the Foundation's International Committee, recently attended the opening of St Angela Home in Maseru by its Patron, His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II. The opening was attended by 500-600 people, in a huge semi-circle outside the Home and as well as the speeches, there was singing by school choirs and action songs by small children, one of these by the seven children now in the Home. During Lady Troughton's speech – through an interpreter – she mentioned the spectacular drive she had had the day before from Maseru to Modimo Pass. As soon as this had been translated, everyone started laughing and clapping, and at the end of the speech there was more applause. Lady Troughton discovered eventually that she had left a vital word out of the name of the Pass – it should have been Modimo Nihuse, meaning "God help me" Pass, and what she had said was her spectacular drive had been from Maseru to God!

ZAMBIA

The Ndola Home has re-opened in new premises after its forced closure last year due to security problems. Six girls are in residence, and a full programme has been organised for them including studying, sewing and crocheting. Some renovation still needs to be done to the building, and a Gala Night is planned to raise funds for this purpose.

JERSEY

Tony Webster, a resident of the Eric Young Cheshire Home, who edits the monthly "Webster's World", was recently co-producer in charge of the cabaret section of a martial arts and cabaret show at Swanson's Hotel. A full house of people came to see "the kind of show which has never before been seen on stage in Jersey"! In spite of the doubts of some of the cabaret artistes who before the show could not visualise how their acts could go successfully with Karate and Judo, it was a smash hit. £700 was raised, and on the strength of its success, another show is planned in October. Our congratulations to Tony.

VISIT BY GROUP CAPTAIN CHESHIRE TO INDIA, THAILAND AND SINGAPORE



Lady Troughton with King Moshoeshoe II – Patron of St Angela Home, and Bishop Paul Khoarai – Chairman of the Home

Lady Troughton with Sister Virginia Ginet – Secretary of the Committee

Residents of Wisma Cheshire Home and cubs from the British run Cub pack in Jakarta enjoy some sport together. The equipment was provided by the cubs, raised from the proceeds of a jumble sale.



Sister Crescentia (Head of Care) with seven children from St Angela Cheshire Home.

Group Captain Cheshire has returned from his visit to the Homes in Calcutta and West Bengal. In the Tollunge Home in Calcutta the children go to school and work therapy is emphasised as well as physiotherapy. The house at Serampore needs major structural reconstruction which will include a new ground floor wing. At the Burnpur Home there is a strong local support and many of the children go to school. At the Jamshedpur Home some of the resident girls entertained the visitors with dancing. The lead dancer had arrived at the Home 7 years ago, completely unable to walk, but has now achieved this remarkable skill due to the care in the Home and the perseverance of local surgeons. At the Ranchi Home, run by the Daughters of Charity, a number of farm animals are kept, and almost every foot of land is used to grow flowers and vegetables, so that they are almost self-supporting in the latter.

THAILAND

At Rangsit the compound is looking cheerful with new shrubs and trees after being filled in after the flooding. The Bang Ping Home has been transformed – the old building has been demolished; a new one is in process of construction. Two temporary buildings house the residents at present. At both these Homes excellent handicrafts are made.

The Home at Cha-am, close to the beach, is built to a very high standard with hardwood floors and modern facilities. At Chiang Mai there is strong involvement by the local community and here again, the residents are engaged in very good handwork.

SINGAPORE

Group Captain Cheshire also saw this Home, where many young volunteers visit on a regular basis, and the Committee plans a major extension in the form of a day care centre.

HOLME LODGE Family Support Services



Sue Hirons, Organiser, in consultation with Supervisor Richard Frampton, aged 25.

Holme Lodge Family Support Service in West Bridgford, Nottingham, has been in operation for four years, has 90 regular clients, 21 Care Attendants, and NO FINANCIAL PROBLEMS, since it is entirely funded by The Manpower Services Commission.

Sue Hirons, the full-time Organiser, explained how it all works:

"The Care Attendants are selected from young men and women usually between the ages of 20 to 30, who must have been unemployed for six months, or in the case of those over 25, for a year.

"None of them may work for more than an average of 20 to 28 hours a week, as the average take home pay must not exceed £67 a week. The duration of the job is for one year only.

Courtesy of MANPOWER SERVICES

Training for the Job

"We also undertake to give them all a week, or if possible, two weeks' training before they begin work.

"This training takes place at Holme Lodge Cheshire Home under the supervision of Head of Care, and we find it a great advantage to work closely with the Home in every respect. The training given involves lifting, toileetting, feeding, and attitudes to disablement. Co-operation is mutually useful. For example, if we were desperate, the Home's Care Assistants would help out, which widens their horizons in the community, and equally if the Home had a crisis, our Care Attendants would lend a hand.

"Our Care Attendants come from all walks of life, with widely varying

academic abilities and qualifications. However, all must provide good references and must show themselves competent during the training period. If they don't they are weeded out immediately.

"In addition to that initial training, we are just beginning a six monthly appraisal and a further training system which will be invaluable as after this time they have acquired experience and possibly established working patterns.

"The MSC are also paying for the employment of two Supervisors on the programme. These are people with some previous experience in the caring field and we are allowed to retain their services for two years.

A £90,000 Grant

"The MSC also pay all our office and travel costs and at the moment our total grant is £90,000 a year - a great relief as instead of living from hand to mouth and having to scratch about fund raising we can get on with the real job of caring. The service, of course, has the added advantage of being completely free to our handicapped clients. Any donations received are handed over to the MSC."

"The amount of the grant has increased on application and as they have been able to see the needs we are meeting and how we are doing it. Of course, the MSC has a budget to allot so it is not a bottomless purse, but they are very perceptive and cooperative."

How Young People Cope with Caring

How did young people cope with the delicate job of dealing with handicapped people in their own homes, and with sometimes difficult and obstinate elderly clients?

"On the whole, extremely well" said Sue, "We have had a few failures over the years, but these have been minimal. In many cases, young people seem less touchy and able to cope better than older people in the same situation.

Gaining New Confidence

"It's been heartening, too, to see how some young people with no confidence in themselves change their personalities once they have a caring job to do and the knowledge that they are also getting a training for a permanent job in the future. Most of them do, in fact, go on to work in the caring professions, or to acquire further qualifications, which is good for the community as a whole."

Was it a disadvantage having a constant change-over of staff?

"Well, it would be nice to keep the really good ones longer," Sue admitted, "But losing a Care Assistant is always on the cards whatever system you operate. We feel

the advantages far outweigh the snags."

Did clients get upset about the lack of continuity?

"We make it perfectly clear from the start that this is the position", she said. "Obviously they often get used to, and fond of, one Care Attendant but they are mentally prepared for a change. They know at least that we try always to match their requirements to the right person and that the care is regular and reliable."

Input from MSC

How much control did MSC exert?

"They don't interfere in the selection of staff at all. They do monitor the training and make periodic spot visits to a few clients, however. They also keep a sharp eye on the finances and administration, but providing you are running things efficiently the surveillance presents no problems."

Sue's opinion is that Family Support Services based on the

community are exactly the sort of projects that MSC are keen to promote, viewing it as a help to those in need and a way of providing training as a prelude to regular jobs.

The Service a Great Success

Mrs Mary Browne, Head of Holme Lodge, who is the Link Manager between the MSC and the FSS, is also certain that funding from this source has been an unqualified success. "We could not have done the job if we had not been determined to get the funding right from the very start. Being based on the Home is mutually helpful with the added benefit that it inspires confidence in clients who know of the work of Cheshire Homes."

Leonard Archer, the Home's Trustee, is also totally convinced of the success of the Service and feels that more Family Support Services should apply for this sort of aid.

■ Editor's note: Letters and comments concerning this scheme welcomed.



Karen Clark helps client Mrs Rayner with her cardigan.

Independent Living Facilities forge ahead in NORTHERN IRELAND



CHESHIRE HOUSE - BELFAST

Susan Harrison, Northern Ireland Co-ordinator, explains:

"In 1973 Group Captain Cheshire visited Northern Ireland, and as a result of his enthusiasm a Project Group was set up in Belfast. Progress was slow at first, but now we are moving ahead and developing fast.

"Cheshire House, Belfast was opened in 1983, the result of a partnership between NIH Housing Association and the Cheshire Project Group. It is situated in the residential area of South Belfast near Queen's University, concert halls, leisure centres, hospitals, churches and shops. Some communal facilities, e.g. dining- and sitting-rooms, laundry- and shower-rooms have been provided, but each resident has a self-contained flat with its own front door and parking area. Each resident has his/her own rent book, the rent including all heat, light and laundry facilities as well as one main meal each day. There is an electronic two-way call system which enables help to be summoned at any time.

"The second city of the province is next on the list - a site has been acquired in Londonderry and the local committee there have planned a 17-flat complex on similar lines to Cheshire House, Belfast. This building is due to start this summer, and will be followed closely by a similar Cheshire Home in Lurgan, Co. Armagh.

The site for this is right in the middle of the town and will serve a wide area of the south of Northern Ireland.

"For several years we have been trying to get a suitable site in the West of the Province, and have at last found a site we like right on the edge of the Upper Loch Erne beside a marina, and although it will require expensive piling before any building can be done, we hope this will be our fourth Cheshire Home.

"Land is also being sought in Co. Antrim, for we have had a large number of enquiries about Cheshire accommodation there. We realise that not every disabled person will be happy living alone in a flat; however, much help can be provided, so we have begun exploring how best to fulfil their needs while still providing privacy and free choice.

"Northern Ireland is only a small country of 51,459 square miles, not much larger than some English counties, but it has its full share of beauty and variety of scenery, with miles of waterways, unspoilt beaches, forest drives and quiet roads.

"In Northern Ireland we are really making up for lost time and more red dots will soon appear on the Cheshire Map. Hopefully by the time all our Homes are built, we will have some spare beds and be ready to give a real Irish welcome to our friends from across the Irish Sea."

Building of New Essex Cheshire Home now under way

The building of Three Forests Cheshire Home in Chigwell, Essex, is now well under way and it is anticipated that the first residents will move in by May 1988.

The need for a residential Home in SW Essex and adjoining London boroughs was first appreciated by a group of people in 1979. Since then a site has been found and planning permission obtained for a Home for up to 30 residents, and some £300,000 raised towards the total cost of £887,000. This figure includes building and equipping the Home, and an allowance for staffing and running costs incurred before fees are received.

The first stage of the Home will provide ten single bed sitting rooms, and four flatlets for severely physically handicapped people, each with its own bathroom, toilet and cooking facilities. In addition there will be communal facilities consisting of a central kitchen, dining room and sitting room.

Plans for the second stage will not be drawn up until the Committee is in a financial position to proceed. The needs of handicapped people will then be assessed and the building designed to meet these.

Group Captain Leonard Cheshire unveiled the entrance stone on 10th December at a ceremony attended by local dignitaries and friends of the projects.

YOU write to US

Some time ago when I was expecting a severely disabled guest from abroad, I asked my local authority if they would provide me with an Orange Badge just for the duration of her month's stay in this country. They would not entertain the idea even though I explained the young lady could not walk far but was looking forward to seeing London's famous tourist spots.

I rang the English Tourist board to complain bitterly at such lack of concern, and found them most helpful. They arranged special parking spots at such places as Westminster Abbey, the Tower and St Paul's (even at the latter laying on a wonderfully helpful 'heavy gang' to carry my friend up and down the steep steps) and asked me to give her their good wishes for a happy holiday.

And a memorable holiday it was thanks to their practical concern for a visitor's problems.

Esmee Taylor
London SW1

As the wife of a severely disabled husband, I am very much against the proposal that the orange badge on cars should only be usable when the disabled person is in the car.

Frequently my husband is not well enough to travel out and would have to wait in a cold car while I do the shopping or alternatively struggle out with me, increasing my constant stress.

If I go out alone, I am always in a hurry, conscious of the fact that I must get back to him in case he has fallen and hurt himself.

Remember, when I shop, go to the bank, visit a chemist, I am acting on behalf of my disabled husband.

In effect, therefore, I feel that the carer has special difficulties and to all intents and purposes is also "disabled". Concessionary parking at least lifts the burden a little.

Isobel Melton
Putney Hill, SW15

As the holder of a disabled car-parking badge, I was amazed to note, on a visit to a large supermarket, that four of the seven car parking spaces reserved for disabled drivers were occupied by cars not displaying the sign.

It would seem, therefore, that the scheme is not being abused by disabled people, but by able-bodied drivers.

Jean Molland
Bere Ferrers, Devon

On the fall of France, my Squadron No 114 was reassembled at Horsham St Faith, Norfolk, and we were housed in the stables and outhouses of Blickling Hall, near Sandringham.

I never had occasion to recall this fact until, at a Royal Garden Party, I was presented to H M the Queen, and her recently donated gift of Park House to the Foundation was mentioned. I replied, not having given it a moment's thought, that I would like to be one of Her Majesty's first guests there. And thus it fell out and I travelled to

Sandringham with my wife and daughter.

The room I was allotted was furnished by the RAF Benevolent Fund and had previously been used by HRH Princess Diana. I understand that until recent repapering, marks of Princess Diana's growing height were recorded on the wall, just as any family might have done. The room was delightful and most convenient and meals were absolutely splendid. I must confess that the waist bands of all my five pairs of trousers must have shrunk! – The explanation I prefer to use.

On one of the many outings on offer, my wife and I chose to return to Blickling. When I signed the visitors' book at a local pub, I found many familiar names recorded.

I could not recommend Park House more highly. An absolutely splendid staff made my fourteen day stay wonderful.

Don Richardson, Sqn.
Ldr. (Ret) RAF resident
of Greenacres, Sutton
Coldfield

TALKING POINT

In a recent letter to The Times, Barbara Lyndon Skeggs, a member of the Northumberland Health Authority, made the following observations concerning the Mobility Allowance:

"Severely disabled people living in the community, and their carers, deserve every possible help."

"However, there are people living in long stay hospitals with every help at hand, receiving mobility allowances which in the main they cannot use."

"My authority holds over £600,000 on behalf of patients unable to use their allowances, and this money accumulates yearly, in high interest deposit accounts, waiting to be handed in due course to next of kin. Is this good use of public money –

waiting to be given to people for whom it was never intended? I would like to see it revert to the State at death and used where it is really needed – for disabled people in the community.

"I might add that the administrative cost of looking after these accounts is also very high. As far as health-care goes it is all dead money and wasted administrative effort."

"If my authority is an average one, there could be £68 million lying idle and increasing each year, which could be put to needy use. It should be."

Replying, Sir John Cox, Director of The Spastics Society, stated:

"The underlying principle is that this money belongs to the individuals to whom it was awarded and should be

spent for their personal benefit. If the patient is unable to handle his or her own affairs, the hospital, in the absence of suitable relatives, is under an obligation to appoint an officer responsible for using the benefit in the interests of the person for whom it was intended.

"Instead of suggesting a redistribution of the accumulated savings, we should be asking why has the money been allowed to accumulate? Why have these patients not been given the opportunity to use the allowance to improve the quality of their lives?

"It could be used to pay taxi fares for trips out to tea, or for a day out; or it could be used to finance a holiday with paid nursing help for the patient if it is needed. Have hospital authorities

considered these possibilities?

"Accumulated savings may, indeed, be in the beneficiaries' best interests. The Government is committed to moving people out of long-stay hospitals wherever possible. By definition, mobility allowance recipients have severe mobility problems and hence high mobility costs which these savings could be used to meet, where the person is trying to establish themselves in the community."

"People with disabilities have the same rights, often harder won, than the rest of us. Let us not seek to remove those rights; let us seek ways to ensure those rights can be exercised."

READERS' VIEWS ON THIS TOPIC WILL BE WELCOMED.

COMPAID

Lorna Ridgway explains

COMPAID stands for "Computer-Aid for Disabled People", a symbol for micro-technology which opens doors to communication, education, leisure and creative activities for those who like these aspects of ordinary living, but for whom their handicap makes them difficult or even impossible.

Writing, drawing, design, accounts, games-playing, from Hoppitt to Scrabble, Crosswords or Chess, not to speak of new learning - all these become possible for the computer-user, no matter how severe the disability.

The idea first took off in 1982 in Seven Springs and is now in use in more than twenty Homes, sometimes through the zeal of residents, sometimes through the enterprise of Heads of Home or Care, or through members of Management. Computer-using Homes send representatives some five times a year to a Working Party Meeting to swap ideas and co-ordinate information. Speech- and Occupational-Therapists have new uses for the technology in their own special fields.

Last year the original Unit at Seven Springs expanded into the COMPAID Trust, a new charity now running an Advice Centre in a local hospital. With other Community Projects, including 'Transport for Special Need's it:-

- advises and teaches disabled individuals about hard- and soft-ware;
- gives hands-on experience from the start;
- helps individual carers, groups and relatives of disabled people;
- designs, writes and provides special software for disabled people;
- sends out ablebodied Trainees, at request, to work for short periods in Homes setting up Computer Units for their residents;
- gives crash courses of instruction to staff from other Homes.

To those who doubt the value of computer technology to improve the quality of life for disabled people I would ask "Would you prefer that disabled people still be pushed around in bath-chairs rather than that, where possible, they be free to control their own mobility in electrically-driven wheelchairs?"

Micro-electronic devices which compensate for handicap have a similar liberating effect upon other aspects of the lives of disabled users. In the words of a Seven Springs user, "It's magic!"

For further information:
COMPAID Trust, Unit CH 1. Pembury Hospital
Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 0UJ.
Tel: 0892 82 4060

Computer Successes at HOLME LODGE

Two severely handicapped Holme Lodge residents, Terry Boot and Mary Allsop, have completed their life stories on word processors in the Home's new computer room.

Terry's story is entitled "The Travelling Man", and Mary's simply "The Girl in the Chair".

Mary had a particular thrill when large extracts from her book were published in the Evening Post, Nottingham, for which she received a fee of £50. She was also interviewed by local radio.

Her success has given a great boost to other residents, twelve of whom are using the computers on a regular basis. "It really has opened up a whole new world for them" commented Head of Home, Mary Browne.

Obituary

Chris Bradley

Seven Springs was saddened this spring by the death of Chris Bradley.

If ever a disabled individual fought against and overcame the effects of severe handicap, that individual was Chris. His lively, inventive mind and strong personality simply refused to be restricted by the disabilities of his body. He found comfort in his Christian belief and liberation by harnessing micro-technology to his own needs.

Chris devised a personal means of input into a computer by persuading his helpers to hitch it up to a MicroWriter, which he

controlled by chin-input. He mastered the symbolic system of small flashing lights over one weekend and after initial word-processing, he set about constructing a data-base of information on which he was working when he died. He said it "made my life much more tolerable". Others, more highly-placed, have said how much he taught them and how much they admired him.

Chris was - still is - an example of the way in which an unquenchable spirit and a tenacious mind can dominate extremely severe disability. I'm glad I knew him. Yours humbly Chris, Lorna Ridgway.



A Day in the life of JEAN TAYLOR

Jean Taylor, a resident of Mote House, in Mote Park, Maidstone, describes a typically busy day.

In common with many other people I suffer from the fact that there are only 24 hours in the day, and since MS forces me to have a reasonable night's sleep, the days of burning the midnight oil are over now for me. Consequently it is important to structure my day carefully, and each day thus becomes an adventure in the use of time.

I like to begin my day gently at about 8am and eat breakfast, usually muesli and coffee, in my own room, providing a calm start to the morning. Having for years been a bookworm, a quiet breakfast gives me a chance to read a few chapters of my current reading matter, probably autobiography, biography or a family saga. I try not to start reading Minutes of meetings, reports etc at this stage since these come under the heading of my 'working day' as opposed to breakfast which is my time, but if I know things are going to be hectic later on, I find a few rousing opera choruses from my cassette player put me in the right frame of mind to cope. Since I used to sing in various choirs I may as well clear my air passages by joining in. Admittedly this may be a shock to anyone passing my room, but it does me good!

After breakfast the first things to be seen are the animals. They are great

company and loved by the residents. The cats object strongly if not fed on time and voice their displeasure loudly, the rabbits attempt to chew their way out of their hutch if I am late, the cockatiels start shrieking the moment they hear me approaching, and if I forget the titbit for our Craft Teacher's Manchester terrier I shall be the one in the doghouse!

One of my great interests being craftwork, I shall try to spend some time doing that, although if I intend to do one of my dried flower collages, the weekend is quieter and more peaceful for such delicate work.

During the morning I do a little typing for one of our Sisters who is doing the C S S Course. I am finding this fascinating – getting all the interest with none of the research and hard work she has had to do – the best of both worlds.

However, it may be necessary for me to go to Park Wood Cash-and-Carry to buy in replacement stock for our Bar, which will take me up to lunch time. Lunch is my main meal of the day. I enjoy most food, with the exception of macaroni cheese. This dislike is probably a throwback to school days after the war when this dish appeared rather too regularly!

If I can get down to shop in Maidstone, that will take me through the first half of the

afternoon, returning to Mote House just in time for a cup of tea at 3.15pm. I may manage to get the roses dead-headed, or just do a little bird-watching from the patio. I am still hoping to see the water-rail who visit the lake.

After supper, when I eat very little, if there is no meeting to attend, a time for relaxation in one of our little sitting-rooms with a couple of other residents should be possible. Since I rarely have time to read the papers these days, I make certain I see the TV news, and after this I shall probably find myself happily hypnotised by any TV programme on travel, wildlife, or a good situation comedy. Almost certainly I shall have my tapestry work on my lap and make some progress while watching.

Of course, all this careful planning may go by the board if a friend turns up unexpectedly for a visit, and we shall go to my room, put on the coffee percolator and catch up on all the news of our lives and of mutual friends. I shall probably be asked to bring out any recent additions to my collection of owl and hedgehog figures.

By 10pm, evening drinks, and I turn in, hoping for a good night's sleep.

DATES for your DIARIES

A Day's Cricketing

Don't forget The Ted Brimfield Rose Bowl Cricket Tournament at Dean Park, Bournemouth on Sunday, August 7th.

This is the fourth year that Ted has run a tournament for the Foundation, and this year proceeds will be in aid of the Foundation's Homes and Services in Dorset and Hampshire.

The cricketers will include players from the Hampshire Hogs, the Dorset County Cricket Club, Pete Murray's All Stars (all well known celebrities) and players from TV South and Radio Station 2CR.

A record turn-out of spectators is expected. Admission to the ground is £2 and there will be all kinds of side shows to divert you, courtesy of The Rotary Club of Bournemouth. Make this a date for you diary.

Disabled residents and their helpers admitted free of charge.

A Day at the Races

Plans for The Cheshire Foundation's Charity Race Day at Ascot on Friday, 25th September, are now well in hand.

The proceeds are in aid of Park House, Sandringham, and the fund raising target set is £200,000.

Members' Enclosure badges are £7.50 each, and car park permits are £2.

Coach parties can be arranged to the course, and it is very much hoped that residential Homes will organise groups to attend. Preferential rates on offer. First race at 1.30pm.

As well as the splendid racing, there will be plant, bottle, cake stalls and other diversions.

On Wednesday, 23rd September, an Auction Dinner by invitation only will be held at The Carlton Tower Hotel, London.

In addition, a national raffle is to be held. Star prize is a Toyota Starlet car, and many other exciting possibilities. Help with selling tickets urgently required.

For further details, badges, parking permits, raffle tickets, and preferential rates for parties from Cheshire Homes, please contact The Race Day Coordinator, Virginia Fisher, Tel: 01-839 3422, or write to her at 5 Charles II Street, London, SW1.

Creative Activity Contest

The Foundation's Creative Activity Contest is well under-way and the date for the prize giving, to be held at The Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Victoria, London, SW1, has been fixed for Thursday, October 1st.

The closing date for receipt of photographic, literary and computer entries was Friday, 24th July (all to Leonard Cheshire House, 26 Maunsell Street, London, SW1P 2QN) and the closing date for receipt of paintings, drawings and all handicrafts is Tuesday, 15th September (to be delivered to The Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre on that day before 2pm).

ADVERTISING RATES

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