

# Cheshire Smile INTERNATIONAL

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE LEONARD CHESHIRE FOUNDATION

## THE GREAT CALL OF CHINA

Hong Kong residents consider what a new government will mean to them

### RELATIONSHIPS

Why *won't* society let disabled people fall in love?

### GOLDEN JUBILEE



"This is a great achievement – let's enjoy it"

Ronald Travers on our 50th anniversary

JANUARY 1997



# THE LEONARD CHESHIRE FOUNDATION



**OUR MISSION** is to assist people with disabilities throughout the world, regardless of their colour, race or creed, by providing the conditions necessary for their physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

**WE BELIEVE** that each person, whatever his or her disability, is a uniquely valuable individual and that people with disabilities should have personal freedom to pursue their aspirations and take their own place in the world.

**OUR AIM** is to offer to those with disabilities:

- Unquestioning recognition of their full human rights
- Standards of excellence in all aspects of care from staff and volunteers
- The support of a forward-looking and responsive organisation, aware of their needs and those of their carers
- The opportunity to take an effective part at every level in running our services
- Partnership in a continuing endeavour to help others, wherever the need.

**The Leonard Cheshire Foundation** provides a range of high-quality services for people with physical and learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and support for their carers in the UK and a further 50 countries throughout the world.

In the UK, the Foundation provides support for more than 8,000 people with a wide range of disabilities and their carers, through its care at home, residential and nursing services. In addition, it is involved in the development of independent and semi independent housing schemes. It also offers respite care, day services and rehabilitation, carries out assessment and provides counselling and training.

In total, there are more than 320 Leonard Cheshire Foundation projects in more than 50 countries around the world, providing support services to people with disabilities.

## WE OFFER AN EXPERIENCED, PROFESSIONAL, FLEXIBLE SERVICE IN THE FIELDS OF:

- Domiciliary care
- Independent living
- Respite care
- Day care
- Day centres
- Counselling
- Rehabilitation
- Training
- Hotel
- Semi-independent living
- Residential homes



**Offering choice and opportunity to people with disabilities**

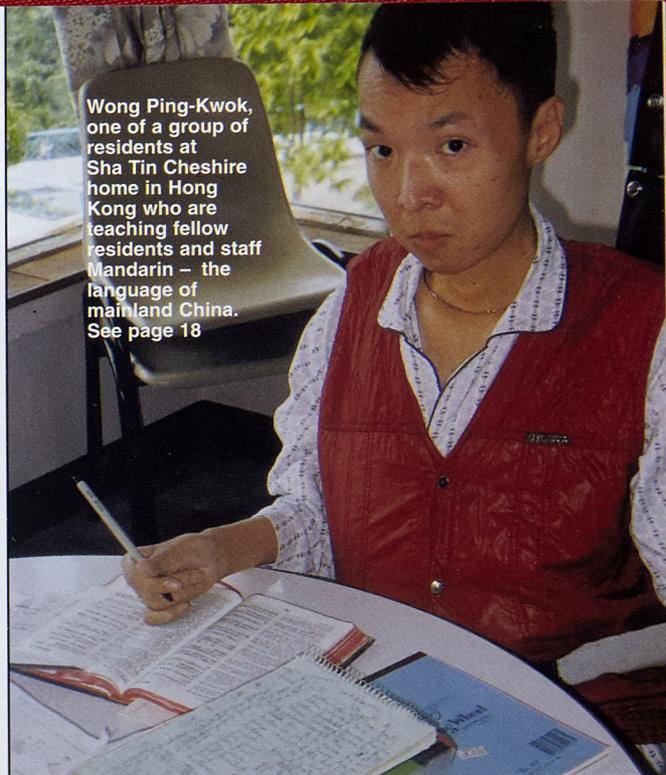
# Cheshire Smile

INTERNATIONAL



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Wong Ping-Kwok, one of a group of residents at Sha Tin Cheshire home in Hong Kong who are teaching fellow residents and staff Mandarin – the language of mainland China. See page 18

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Taking the challenge at Kielder Water. Page 8



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**LEATHER BOUND:** Representatives from the Katpadi Cheshire Home and Ramco Super Leather Industries celebrate the launch of a new workshop for disabled and able-bodied women

## Enterprise wins its first contract

CHESHIRE Enterprise, a work centre at the Foundation's home in New Jersey, USA, recently secured its first contract.

The centre's employees, who are all residents of the home at Florham Park, recently completed a mailing for Morristown Memorial Hospital and began work on a long-term project for the American Automobile Association.

Cheshire Enterprises, which comes under the home's Cheshire Vocation Department, is located at the home's community resource centre.

"The pilot programme not only provides employment for residents, it also teaches them the skills they need to succeed in the regular workforce," reports a recent edition of the home's Chronicle magazine.

"In addition to vocational and educational counselling, employees of Cheshire Enterprises have the opportunity to test and expand their personal limits within an understanding environment."

Cheshire Enterprises currently employs eight residents – Diane Golbeille, Carol Hoehle, Karen Moore, Alice Papa, Deepak Patel, Michael Phillips, Tyrone Towers and Muriel Wild.

## Celia adds a silken touch

A HOME in Uganda has benefited from the efforts of a resident at an English home in the west midlands.

Celia Green is selling original silk-painted scarves, book-

marks, cushions, greetings cards and pictures to raise money for Greenacres' twin home, Nkokonjeru.

"With silk painting every design is unique, so there is no fear of two people having the same item," said Celia, who has raised more than £2,000 for Greenacres and has also demonstrated her art at an event at Le Court Cheshire Home in Hampshire.

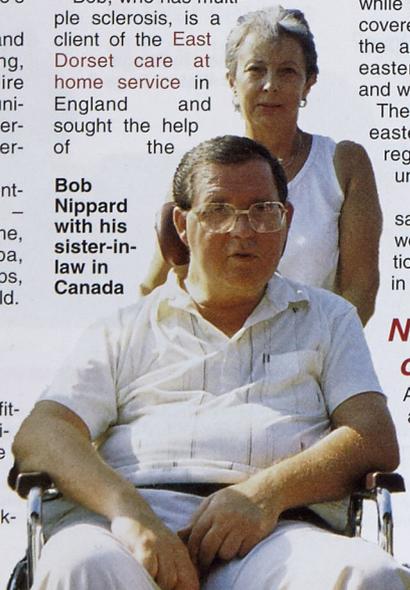
The proceeds from the sale of the silk paintings were put towards the cost of a new water pump at the Ugandan home.

## Bob meets his brother in Canada

BOB NIPPARD has seen his brother for the first time in 14 years – all thanks to the Foundation.

Bob, who has multiple sclerosis, is a client of the East Dorset care at home service in England and sought the help of the

**Bob Nippard with his sister-in-law in Canada**



Foundation's international office when he decided to visit his brother Mike in Canada.

"It occurred to me that such a visit was now possible," said Bob. "I spoke to my carer who agreed to come with me, so I booked our flights.

"I could not stay with my brother as his home would not have been sufficient for my needs, but the Foundation's international office arranged for me to stay at the local home in Regina, Saskatchewan.

"As I spent most of the time with my family, I only slept and showered at the home – but it was a splendid home with a great atmosphere!

"I had a good holiday and hope to return in similar circumstances. The trip would not have been possible without the assistance from the Foundation and the care managers."

## New regions as world map is redefined

THE FOUNDATION'S world map has been split into nine regions in the first major reorganisation for nearly 25 years.

The central and western regions have been redefined after a review which examined the ability of each region to operate cost-effectively and the relationship between region and training.

"A number of factors were taken into account, including the tremendous expansion in the number of services worldwide, distances and ease of travel and the management of training programmes both current and planned," said international director Rupert Ridge.

The western region services now come under the new regions of north America, Latin America and the Caribbean, while the central region, which covered Africa, is now defined in the areas of southern Africa, eastern and northern Africa and western Africa.

The European and northern, eastern and far eastern regions will remain unchanged.

This is the first reorganisation of the Foundation's world map since the formation of the far eastern region in 1972.

## New workshop opens in India

A NEW workshop to teach able-bodied and disabled women skills for self-employment has been opened in India.

The workshop, at the Katpadi Cheshire Home,

was launched in conjunction with Ramco Super Leather Industries Vellore and Worth Trust Industries, with the Inner Wheel Club of Vellore North.

Women who use the workshop will learn skills including hand-stitching of shoes.

## Ruth's stories are the write stuff!

RUTH SHEARMAN, who lives at the Manor Cheshire home in Brampton, Cambridgeshire, England, has won the main prize in an inter-home craft competition.

Ruth's short stories and poetry won the CT Driffill Cup at the competition for residents of homes in the east midlands group.

You can read one of her winning entries, "No Chair For Donna", on page 30.

## Pam Hickley retires

PAMELA HICKLEY OBE has retired as the Honorary Secretary of the Singapore Cheshire Home.

Pam, who is a cousin of Leonard Cheshire, was involved in the founding of the home at



**RETIRING:**  
Pam Hickley

Telok Paku, an old army gunitse near Changi Beach in 1957.

She became honorary secretary for the first year and held the post again from 1978 until her retirement.

Pam, who has been a management committee member since before the home opened, was made an MBE in 1964 and was awarded the OBE in last year's birthday honours list.

## Jersey mourns Maldwyn Thomas

THE DEATH of Maldwyn Thomas, founding chairman of the Jersey Cheshire Home, brought back many memories to those who served with him in the early years.

Tommy, as he was affectionately known to the members of

# St Bridget's wins Innovation in Care award

ST BRIDGET'S Respite Care At Home Service in Sussex, England has won the Foundation's inaugural major award for an innovation in care.

Kay Wiltshire, who has run the service since its inception in 1994, received the award from television personality Esther Rantzen at a special awards ceremony at London's Copthorne Hotel.

The service was awarded the honour after being nominated by user Gillian Gray, who described the facility as "invaluable".

Kay said the key was discovering exactly what kind of service clients wanted.

"They did not want a 'pop in, pop out' service where the support worker came in for an hour, got them up, went out, came back to make lunch, went out and came back to put them to bed - and went out again," she said.

"People with severe disabilities said they wanted someone to stay in, be on call and sleep overnight."

Kay received the Muriel Taylor Award, which was presented in memory of the Foundation's only disabled woman trustee, who died on Boxing Day 1995.

Runners up were: David Hassell, who was featured in the last edition of Cheshire Smile International, for his fundraising efforts for Foundation services in the Philippines; The Mallard Restaurant in Dedham, Suffolk for its facilities for disabled diners; Mary Lovell, a volunteer at Heatherley Cheshire Home in West Sussex.



**THE WINNING TEAM:** left to right services director Barry Leroy-Baker, management committee chairman Fiona Miles, the Foundation's UK chairman Sir David Goodall, service user Gillian Gray, Kay Wiltshire and Gillian's husband Mick

The UK awards were launched to reward people who have taken the initiative to provide that little bit of extra help to improve someone's quality of life.

The Foundation asked disabled service users to nominate individuals or groups who are delivering new and innovative

care practices. The judging panel comprised six people with disabilities, two of whom were Foundation service users.

The awards have proved so successful they are to be expanded to a wider audience of disabled people in subsequent years.

the steering committee, applied his business acumen to the task in hand, which began with nothing but hope and ended in the realisation in 1983 of Eric Young House.

He is remembered for his gentle sense of humour, his inspirational leadership applied with charm and firmness and his sensibility to those in need.

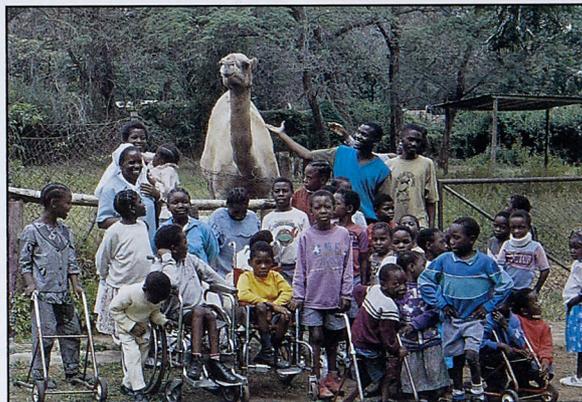
## Anne receives her MBE

ANNE MARTIN, who played a significant part in setting up Foundation services in Northern Ireland, recently received her MBE from the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Anne, whose name was listed in last year's birthday honours list, joined the Northern Ireland Cheshire Committee in 1973 as it sought to establish whether Foundation services could be set up in the province.

As a result, independent living units were opened in Belfast in 1983, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Housing Association, and similar units were opened in Londonderry and Craig Arbou.

Anne became Northern Ireland's link trustee in March 1986 and, following the



**LLAMARAMA:** Young residents at Lusaka Cheshire Home in Zambia are pictured during a recent visit to the zoo

announcement of her retirement last year, was made a Foundation vice-president.

## Mr Bayoh takes the chair in Bo

THE SIR Milton Margai home in Sierra Leone has a new chairman.

Mr SM Bayoh is currently the principal of St Andrew's School in Bo.

He takes over the chair from Mr JA Tommy, who has been

appointed the deputy minister of local government of Sierra Leone.

## Jersey residents head for the Tyrol

EIGHTEEN residents and 26 staff and volunteers from Jersey's Cheshire Home took a trip through France, Austria and Italy during a recent Tyrolean holiday.

The holiday was made possible by a £20,000 grant from the

Association of Jersey charities and gave many of the residents the opportunity to travel overseas for the first time.

Activities during the holiday included rides by cable car and horse and cart and a boat trip on Lake Garda.

## Linda is voted the top employee

LINDA HO, a resident at the Singapore home, recently picked up her second award for being the top employee at the company where she works.

Linda, who works as a telephone operator in the country's Novotel Orchid hotel, was recently awarded the honour of employee of the month.

This follows her recognition as employee of the year for 1995.

Linda, who has muscular dystrophy and uses a wheelchair, answers calls, takes messages for guests and staff members and helps them to make overseas calls.

"Linda won the awards because she is very professional in her work," said the hotel's front office manager Eric Yeo.

Linda has lived at the country's Cheshire home for more than ten years.

"I prefer to be treated normal-

## Kolbe gets into training



**TRAINING PROGRAMME: Kolbe House, Zambia**

TEENAGE boys with disabilities are learning a trade thanks to a new training centre in **Zambia**.

Kolbe House was donated to the Foundation by the Franciscan Friars and following help from LCF International and Le Court in England, gives its residents vocational training.

The training is in life skills, vocational training in woodwork, mixed agriculture, tailoring, local crafts, basic cookery skills, basic management skills and book-keeping.

The woodwork training will include the making of hand-tools and the mixed agriculture will include the purchase of livestock, general animal husbandry and allotment keeping.

The scale of these projects will be such that a trainee will be able to continue with the skills learned on the same scale once he returns home.

The trainees will be encouraged to manage their own allotments and livestock, being involved with the purchase and sale of goods – from which they will learn simple book-keeping skills. Trainees will earn money towards the cost of

tools from the sale of their own produce.

Tailoring will be taught using hand and foot-operated machines suitable for use anywhere. Items made will depend on the demand of the local market.

The local crafts will depend on the skills of local craftsmen, but may include basket-making, weaving or leatherwork.

It is predicted that the actual training will be self-financing once it is up and running.

It will produce vegetables, meat and fruit once the grounds have become established and livestock purchased.

In the near future a poultry unit will be established, rearing day-old chicks, which will help finance the home.

Already established is a pig unit, which will be expanded in the near future, if funds are available.

An interest has been expressed by a hotel chain for the purchase of various woodwork items. Once benches are made and grants received, the production of these items will begin.



**ALL TOGETHER NOW: Delegates at the recent Far Eastern region conference**

ly," she said. "If I had not lived here, it would have been difficult for me to finish my studies and find a job.

"I am happy to have won the awards," she added. "They will motivate me to work harder."

### 15 years and the work goes on

RESIDENTS, volunteers and staff at the Cheshire Home in Florham Park, New Jersey, USA marked the 15th anniversary of their home by beginning work on a new project.

Work on Cheshire III, a housing unit for young, physically-disabled adults, was begun with a "ground-breaking" ceremony as the home marked its anniversary in October.

Following the ceremony, residents led a procession back to the Cheshire Home and a party "celebrating the accomplishments of residents".

The day included a barbecue, tours of the home, a resident art show, pumpkin painting and carnival game booths.

### Team to review Far East region constitution

THE CONSTITUTION of the Foundation's Far Eastern region is to be reviewed following the region's recent biennial general meeting.

The two-day conference in Jakarta welcomed delegates from Indonesia, Singapore, Japan, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia and the Philippines, who met to discuss the theme: "Towards achieving better co-ordination and co-operation of the Cheshire movement in this region."

Following a suggestion that the chairmanship should be rotated so each country took a turn, it was agreed to set up a sub-committee, headed by regional chairman Justice Lai Kew Chai, to review the region's

written constitution.

Other matters to be discussed include whether it is appropriate to keep unchanged a constitution that refers to "the Founder" taking decisions and the definition of Hong Kong as "a country" following the territory's transfer to Chinese rule in June.

The conference also highlighted the development of training programmes in the region and ideas were also presented on fundraising issues.

The meeting was also attended and addressed by the Foundation's international chairman Sir Patrick Walker and the international director Rupert Ridge.

"It is very important to remember the Founder's spirit and do all we can to continue it," said Sir Patrick, while Rupert referred to the Foundation's standards which, he said, "set us apart as an organisation."

The conference concluded with social events and sightseeing trips.

A Chinese delegation was unable to be present at the weekend owing to last-minute problems with visas.

### Moises meets the professor

MOISES DIAZ, one of the trustees of the Philippine Council of Cheshire Homes, welcomed an opportunity to meet scientist Professor



Stephen Hawking during a recent visit to England.

Professor Hawking, who has had motor neurone disease for most of his adult life, is the author of the best-selling theory



about the beginning of the universe, "A Brief History of Time".

Moises, who is pictured (left) with Professor Hawking (right) and international assistant director Mark O'Kelly (centre) at Cambridge, took the opportunity to present the professor with a copy of his own book, "Spiritual Force".

## New home opens in Thailand

ITHARAT ROI ED HOME has become the latest Cheshire home to open its doors.

The home in north-east Thailand, named after the donor of the land, admitted its first residents in November and has one building to commemorate Queen Sirikit's 60th birthday.

## New minibus for day centre users

RESIDENTS at the Kyrenia Cheshire Day Centre in Cyprus have a new vehicle – thanks to representatives of the Meadow House Younger Disabled Unit in Swaffham, Norfolk, England.



**GOOD FOR BUSINESS:** Boy Nkosi and David Nkosi at the Mpumalanga Cheshire Home in South Africa build a Swazi hut as an 'authentic' surrounding from which to sell craft items made in the home

The vehicle will undergo some minor repairs before being shipped out to Cyprus – complete with 40 wheelchairs from the Foundation's organisation CHAD (Cheshire Homes Aids for Disabled people).

## Service welcomes 500th new client

THE number of people supported by the East Dorset care at home service in England has increased sevenfold in just three years.

The service, based in Poole,

# Sue Ryder becomes UK's first president

BARONESS Ryder of Warsaw has become the Foundation's first president.

Lady Ryder was appointed to the new post at the Foundation's annual general meeting.

"We are delighted Lady Ryder has accepted the invitation to become our president," said UK chairman Sir David Goodall.

"She is our closest personal link with Leonard Cheshire and shares the same aspirations.

"Her presidency will further strengthen the bonds of friendship and co-operation between our two Foundations and will be a source of inspiration as we approach our Golden Jubilee."

Sue Ryder was born on July

3, 1923. She served with the Polish section of the Special Operations Executive during World War II, and began relief work amid the devastation in Poland.

She founded the Sue Ryder Foundation in 1953 as a living memorial to the millions who died in the two world wars, and to those who today are suffering and dying as a result of persecution.

She was awarded the OBE in 1957 and the CMG in 1976 and became a life peer in 1979.

She married Leonard Cheshire in 1959 and is a trustee of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation, the Ryder-Cheshire Foundation and the World Memorial Fund for Disaster Relief.



was launched in 1974, but since the Community Care Act came into being in the UK in 1993, the

University near Tokyo, visited the first-ever Cheshire home as part of a two-week tour of Europe.

The students were shown around by Le Court residents and given a short talk. A buffet lunch was followed by a general question and answer session and each student was presented with a Le Court mug and teatowel.

## 25 years' loyal service honoured

HOLEHIRD Cheshire Home at Windermere, England recently honoured two of its longest-serving staff members at a special ceremony.

Head of care Sylvia Nicholson and care assistant Margaret Bell have both worked at the home, in the heart of the Lake District, since 1971.

Margaret and Sylvia were

each presented with a certificate, a gift token and a large bouquet of flowers to mark their 25 years' service.

"It is very heartening in these times of job mobility and of seeking promotion, to find people who prefer job satisfaction and are willing to stay in a job for 25 years," said Holehird resident Marie Southworth.

"I, along with the other residents, thank them and wish them many more happy years here."

## Chiltern wipes the slate clean

LCF director general James Stanford visited Chiltern Cheshire Home in Gerrards Cross, England, recently to celebrate the end of a six-year fundraising campaign which has cleared a £1.6-million loan.

client-base has risen from 70 to more than 500.

"The service believes in giving a high-quality, friendly service which is run on efficient lines," said staff manager Liz Howes.

## Japanese visitors to Le Court

LE COURT in Hampshire, England, welcomed visitors from the east when staff and residents met Japanese students recently.

The 30 students, from Shukutoku Social Welfare



**BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS:** Residents and staff at Masterton Cheshire Home in Zimbabwe mark Founder's Day in style

**DO YOU HAVE A STORY FOR SMILE?  
SEND YOUR NEWS TO CHESHIRE SMILE  
INTERNATIONAL, 26-29 MAUNSEL ST,  
LONDON SW1P 2QN, ENGLAND**

The Kielder Challenge is a unique event. Set in the heart of Northumbria in the north-east of England, it challenges people to compete in a series of outward bound tasks. Some competitors have disabilities, some are able-bodied, but teamwork is everything and, as PETER TAYLOR-WHIFFEN discovered, everyone comes along with their own particular skill.

# Northern exposure

**I**T'S just coming up to midday on a Saturday at the end of September. What started as a fine, light rain has turned into a deluge and I'm wondering what I'm doing here.

I could, I reflect, be doing my weekend shopping. I could be enjoying my lunch in front of a football programme on TV. So why am I about to step backwards off a 20-foot high abseiling tower?

At this precise split second there seems to be no good reason. A strong, gusting wind whips across the Northumbrian countryside and the accompanying rain lashes into my face. No, no good reason at all.

When I'd said I would come to the north-east of England for the Kielder Challenge, the initial understanding was that I would be a VIP. An observer.

This excellent plan began to go awry when I spoke to the event organiser, Jenna Taylor, earlier in the week. I called her at The Minorities Cheshire Home in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and asked: "Would you like me to observe, or to take part?" The rest, as they say, is hysteria.

The Kielder Challenge has become an annual event for people of all abilities at the Calvert Trust's outward bound centre, which overlooks Kielder Water. It is organised by the LCF Services in Northumbria in conjunction with the Calvert Trust and benefits from a generous injection of cash sponsorship from the Northern Rock building society.

Six teams of 12 competitors of all levels of ability are set tasks which can only be successfully achieved by initiative-led teamwork and the understanding and recognition of every team member's contribution.

Which brings me back to the top of the abseiling tower. I can see only the top of the tower and the sky, but I know

my every move is being watched by my team-mates and I'm just hoping I don't let them down. Fortunately, the wind drops and I am able to ease myself steadily towards the ground. I'm surprised to find it's really not that difficult.

The Blue Peacocks, as our team has been named, are a mixed bag. Four of us have physical disabilities, one has a history of mental health problems, two have a learning disability and the rest of us are able-bodied - whatever that means in an event which has already succeeded in levelling out all advantages.

Our first task was to construct the highest possible freestanding tower, using only bamboo canes and pieces of string. I can't tie knots to save my life, but Billy, who is physically disabled, and Gary, who has a learning disability, both can and we achieve the second highest tower of the day.

Then it is the archery. With only a limited time in which to hit a set number of targets, it's felt imperative that while everybody should have a go, we should keep our best three archers on if we're to stand a chance of winning. I happily take a back-seat as our top bowmen do the business. One has a physical disability, one has a mental health problem and one is able-bodied.

"Don't worry if you don't hit the target, Billy," says one of our team soothingly, as our top archer takes aim once again. "Don't feel pressured. I just want you to know that if you miss, none of us will ever speak to you ever again." As Billy has already hit four bullseyes, this causes much amusement.

Our teamwork doesn't all go entirely smoothly. I have difficulty understanding my fellow teammates. Disabilities are one thing, Geordie accents quite another.





## THE KIELDER CHALLENGE

The Kielder Challenge is an annual event staged jointly at Kielder Water by the Calvert Trust and the LCF Services in Northumbria, and sponsored by the Northern Rock building society.

This year's event saw six teams of 12 compete in seven different challenges, which included making a bamboo tower, a treasure trail, semaphoreing, abseiling and canoeing.

The teams were preselected to ensure each one included people with physical and learning disabilities, people with mental health problems and able-bodied people.

"Because the whole event takes place outside everyone's normal environment, everyone is put in the same unfamiliar surroundings," said organiser Jenna Taylor.

"It enables people to see each other as people, rather than disabled people, carers and staff – no-one has an advantage over anyone else."

There are six disciplines on the first day and by the time the last one comes round, we know we are in the lead and want to stay there.

Our task is to build a throne out of natural materials in a forest, which means negotiating wheelchairs over the rough ground to our chosen site.

Fred, a wheelchair-user, and I struggle gamely for the first few yards before deciding we need help.

"Can someone help me lift Fred through the wood please?" I call to the retreating backs of my team-mates.

"Well, we're collecting wood at the moment," comes one reply. I can't help thinking it would be a better idea if we were all there *before* we started collecting wood, but fortunately another team member checks himself and comes back to lend a hand.

It's probably the fact that we finish the day in the lead that prompts a similar situation the following morning. Knowing we have to win the final game – semaphoreing – to be champions, speed is of the essence.

Fred is, understandably, uncomfortable at the prospect of being wheeled over a muddy field at great speed. He nods firmly when I ask him if he would like us to take it slowly.

"Well I'm afraid Fred hasn't got any choice," says the same team member. "Come on." Fortunately she's in a

minority of one.

It's not, in the end, the speed at which Fred traverses the field that costs us the game, but the fact that other members of the team can't work out how to put the flagged words in the correct order.

So we finish the game third, and third overall. There is disappointment – having led for so long we wanted to win. But in the end it really doesn't seem to matter.

The whole point of the weekend was to level out the different abilities. It was very apparent in the games, and even more so on the disco dance floor on the Saturday night, that this was achieved.

Somehow it was achieved without anyone even trying. There were people with so many different backgrounds at Kielder this weekend. Clients, carers, staff, volunteers and several Northern Rock employees, but *never* was there

any sense of "them and us". Nobody was uncertain, nobody was patronising, nobody was "left-wing and right-on". We were all people just competing, forging friendships – and having fun.

Full marks and thanks to the Calvert Trust, Northern Rock and above all to Jenna Taylor and her team at the Minorities for an event that taught me this is how it *should* be, *always*.

People can and do talk about "attitudes" towards disabled people and how they should be treated. But there is no secret. It was so refreshing to be part of an event where everyone's contribution was as valuable as the next person's. Everyone treated everyone else *exactly* the same – as an individual.

And like the abseiling, it's really not that difficult.



This Foundation service was broken into seven times in seven days. Two murders have taken place within yards of it. There is prostitution and major drug crime on the streets around it. But in the heart of one of England's capital's most deprived areas is a facility which continues to serve the people of the community - whatever else is going on. Welcome to Hackney.

# London calling



**J**ANET ASHTON got a nasty shock when she switched on the TV news one morning as she got ready for work. The first thing she saw was the Foundation's Alfred Heath Centre in Hackney - cordoned off by police investigating a murder.

"It was quite alarming first thing in the morning," says Janet, who is the manager of the Foundation's services in the borough. "Police had put blue and white tape right across the road.

The incident was nothing to do with the centre, but had happened a few yards away and police had closed the roads."

This is by no means a typical start to the day, but it is an example of the types of problems the Foundation faces as it provides a service to disabled people in one of the most deprived areas of London.

The Alfred Heath Centre, like the neighbouring Sam and Annie Cohen centre, is described by Janet as a

"resource bank" where disabled people can come to receive help to enable them to gain skills they would otherwise be unable to develop.

The centre has been running for nearly 30 years, but the Foundation assumed responsibility for it in 1994. The challenges made themselves apparent early on.

"We were broken into seven times in a week," says Janet. "Videos, TVs, computers were stolen - the first thing we had to do was install a

security system and put up fences. It's a shame that we have to, but otherwise we'd go home at night and have nothing left in the morning."

Other changes were quickly made. Redecoration was just the start of building an environment that is comfortable, but the establishing of new attitudes was Janet's key priority.

"The centre was disgraceful when we first came here. The place was a tip – almost as if there had been an attitude of 'these are only disabled people, so it doesn't matter'.

"We wanted people to tell us what they wanted from our service, but initially they couldn't do it. It seems many of them were frightened that if they criticised something or disagreed with it, they would be 'taken off the list' and not allowed to come here any more.

"So we began assertiveness training and stressed that it is *their* service. For a lot of people, that has taken some getting used to, because they have never had the opportunity to speak out and certainly never believed it was their place to say what they wanted."

Janet is continuing to remove or change anything that is in danger of perpetuating a 'them and us' attitude.

"There were toilets that said 'staff on them – as if staff need different toilets," she said. "Those signs came off straightaway. There is a wheelchair ramp into the building – round the back by the dustbins. We're having one built at the front. And we inherited light switches that are five feet off the ground, so we're



**BUS-INNESS AS USUAL:** Day service users with their new bus, donated by the Three Forests Cheshire Home in Chigwell, Essex

moving them down. All these things smack of power over disabled people – whereas all we want to do is help our clients to run their own service."

Janet is very keen to stress the Alfred Heath Centre is a *day service*, not a *day centre*. "Day centres, in the public perception of the phrase, are places where people come along, get fed and entertained and go home. We're not here to entertain people – and as more and more disabled people are able to take control of their own lives, I believe many such day centres will soon be a thing of the past.

"We want people to come here and really get something out of this facility. We are here for people who

want to learn social skills and do something with their lives. We do have clients who do hobbies – painting, knitting etc, activities perhaps associated with traditional day centres, and some of these people are extremely talented. But this facility has knitting *classes*, and if someone paints a picture, we don't say 'that's lovely, we'll put it on the wall for you' – we say 'how can we help you to take this further?' We're not here to entertain, we're here to help people who want to achieve things for themselves."

**T**he centre's best example of this is its snack bar (see panel overleaf), which was set up in April and is run by users for users. Just the choice of a menu is a new experience for people who are used to having a meals on wheels service, and the bar's long opening hours have made a welcome change from having to eat at a certain time whether or not they are hungry.

"Now our service users are aware of how they can help to run the centre," says Janet. "This facility is now meeting people's needs better than ever before, because for the first time we know *exactly* what people's needs are."

The service plays a valuable role in the maintenance of a powerful and much-needed community spirit. Hackney's famous marshland is the reason it is the innermost London borough not to be served by the London Underground system. This in turn means it has one of the lowest commuter populations in the city – and considerably less money than its affluent neighbour, Islington.

Those with money have left for the





# Users make a

**T**HE Alfred Heath Centre's aims and achievements are probably best summed up by its snack bar, a facility run by service users for service users.

Even before it was opened in April, staff were keen that it was not simply going to provide occupational therapy. Posts were advertised, interviews were held among interested service users, and staff were appointed from people who were very keen to use this as a springboard towards paid employment.

Florence Morakinyo works on the till three days a week and would do more if she had the time. "I used to have an administration job in an insurance company, before I became disabled five years ago," she says.

"This is the first chance I have had since then to do a job that means something, that gives me a real sense of value. I've been to day centres and I've played Ludo and bingo, and I always knew I was capable of more than that."

Florence, who lives in Hackney, says the snack bar has given her a faith in

her own ability. "On the practical side, working the till has given my fingers much more physiotherapy than they would otherwise have had. But it also keeps my mind busy. When you have nothing to do, as I did, you spend a lot of time thinking about the past, the present and the future. I became very miserable."

A social worker introduced Florence to the centre, a move which opened up a range of possibilities for her. "I do enjoy this. It does keep me busy and makes me feel I'm doing something worthwhile," she says. But she adds that her plans are much longer term than that.

"I want to go to work - I want that freedom, that independence. It's not just about having something to do, it's about really wanting to get on, to achieve something. I want to show people I'm capable of holding down a job."

The manager of the snack bar is a qualified catering professional and service manager Janet Ashton hopes the next stage will be to give NVQ training to those who want it.

"It is a professionally-run operation," she says. "When we interviewed, we told people what would be expected of them, in terms of their responsibility for getting here on time and working the number of hours required. These things can take some getting used to when you have been out of a job for a long time, or if you've never had a job."

"A lot of people who work here want to earn their own living and through this, and plans to set up employment liaison schemes with local firms, we want to help them to achieve that."

The establishment of the snack bar has presented some interesting challenges of its own. When it was first opened, there was a race to be at the front of the queue at midday, because a lot of the service users had been used to having their meals at the same time every day.

"The idea that you can be flexible about when you eat has taken some getting used to for some people," says Janet.

"Likewise, the idea of getting to the front of a queue and then choosing what you would like - so many of the



# meal of it

people have learned to resign themselves to accepting whatever they get given. Choice is something that some people didn't even realise was possible."

There is certainly a choice on the menu, dictated as much as anything by the dietary needs and choice of the users themselves. There is always, for example, at least one dish on the menu that is without salt, for the members of the Moslem community. Pork dishes will offend the service's Jewish users and occasionally there is a guest chef to cater for a specific group, which also provides an interesting choice for other diners.

"We have invested very heavily in this snack bar," says Janet, "but it is imperative to get everything right. That means things like buying matching crockery and matching cutlery - and binning all the plastic plates.

"If you go into a snack bar in the high street, you wouldn't put up with cutlery that didn't match, or plastic plates. Why should users of this service?"

Jean Ayres from Clapton has been coming to the centre for 27 years.

"The snack bar has made a lot of difference," she says. "It is good to have that freedom of just going up to the counter when you want to and asking for the food you fancy, rather than just being given something."

In contrast, Helen Prosper is enjoying only her second visit to the centre, and its snack bar. "There is nothing else like this in the area," she says.

"My week has changed since I came here - I would be sitting around doing nothing if I wasn't here. The atmosphere is so good - people really take an interest in what you do, and what you want to do."

Pat Wright had been adamant she wouldn't come to the centre. "I had a friend who kept trying to drag me along - I didn't want to go to a day centre.

"But then I said I would try it for a couple of days, and that was a couple of years ago. There is so much opportunity for you to do what you want to."

new towns and the exodus has left an even poorer area with all the consequential knock-on effects. Hackney is believed to have the highest number of incidences of drug-related crime in Britain, and the biggest red light district in London apart from King's Cross. Each day is regularly punctuated by the sound of "the Hackney orchestra", Janet's term for the police sirens heard travelling at high speed past the Alfred Heath Centre several times a day. Many of the service's 300 users have been the victims of crime - and some have been mugged.

Another challenge for the service is to cater for the needs of a multi-cultural borough. Hackney has strong Jewish, Turkish, Afro-Caribbean, Asian and South American communities.

"One of the main aims of those involved with the Alfred Heath Centre is to ensure the service is accessible on a very personal level to anybody who needs it," stresses Janet. "Our training is very much centred around the individual and our staff all attend courses countering ageism, sexism, racism, homophobia - any form of discrimination."

The local authority presents yet another challenge. Hackney has made very public efforts to reflect every ethnic community - most controversially by changing the words of the nursery rhyme 'Baa Baa Black Sheep' because it considered them racist. However, its social services department has been forced to elect three chairmen in the last year, which makes for difficulties when trying to establish a consistent relationship.

Janet knows exactly where she wants the service to go next. "We want links with housing associations. We want partnerships that will enable us to provide a better resource bank for people with disabilities."

The new Homerton Hospital across the road is one area where the service hopes to link up. The centre is developing a physiotherapy unit and Janet sees this as an ongoing service for people to use when they are discharged from the hospital. There are also developments in rehabilitation and the facility shares its premises with other welfare organisations.

"We don't want to provide a well-meaning service that doesn't do anything," says Janet. "We want disabled people to get something from this service themselves.

"Society seems to be led by the idea that we should all aim to be perfect - whatever that is - and society doesn't value you if you don't fit into that 'perfect' category. We certainly value people as individuals."

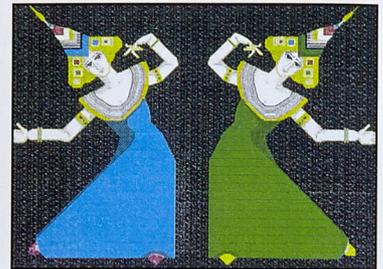
*The Foundation's Christmas card competition winners*



RUNNER-UP: Bernard Semuddu



RUNNER-UP: Her Chi Ming



RUNNER-UP: Keiko Mizogami

# Compliments of the season!



FIRST PRIZE: James Mburung'ang'a

**JAMES MBURU NG'ANG'A** has won the 1996 Leonard Cheshire Foundation International Christmas Card Competition.

James, who is a user of the Limuru Cheshire Home services in Kenya, won with his design of the world being held in a pair of hands.

James's design will be used as the LCFI Christmas card.

Awojulu Vincent's design won second prize and will be used as the UK Foundation's Christmas card. Awojulu Vincent lives at the Oluyole Cheshire Home in Nigeria.

The six runners-up are Wilfred Grieve from the Rotary Cheshire Home in Ontario, Parasha Ram Upadhyay from Delhi, Keiko Mizogami from Harima, Boonruay Saekow from Siri Wattana, Thailand, Bernard Semuddu from Katalamwa, Uganda and Her Chi Ming from Wuhan, China.



SECOND PRIZE:  
Awojulu Vincent



RUNNER-UP:  
Wilfred Grieve



RUNNER-UP:  
Boonruay Saekow



RUNNER-UP:  
Parasha Ram Upadhyay

# A Golden opportunity



**In 1998 the Foundation will celebrate its 50th anniversary. MARTHA ROBINSON spoke to Ronald Travers, chair of the Golden Jubilee Committee, to find out how everyone can get involved**

**T**he majority of disabled people have never heard of The Leonard Cheshire Foundation. Many purchasers and potential users of our services see the Foundation as stuck in a time-warp.

These are some of the findings of a UK survey commissioned by the Foundation's strategic development group.

The Foundation has to increase its public profile and dispel many misconceptions about the services it provides. Our Golden Jubilee in 1998

# Going for gold: planned jubilee events

- **World Week**

Will be held at the Copthorne Tara Hotel in London, England, from Sunday 5 July to Sunday 12 July 1998

- **UK Conference**

Will be held during the Spring of 1999. Delegates will include service users, volunteers and staff. Venue to be confirmed.

- **Golden 50 tea parties**

A record-breaking international tea party will be held during the year. The Foundation's 'Golden 50' will be invited to a tea party in the UK. At the same time, all services in the UK and overseas will be encouraged to hold their own party.

Advice on holding a jubilee tea party will be given to services via a

tea party pack.

- **Golf Days**

Services in the UK will be asked to hold a fundraising golf day at a local golf club. The four highest scoring teams from these local events will be invited to a pro-celebrity golf day at one of Britain's top golf clubs.

**Have you run a successful fundraising event outside the UK? Perhaps you have some ideas for the Golden Jubilee and want to share them with other international services? If so, contact: Ronald Travers, c/o The Golden Jubilee, The Leonard Cheshire Foundation, 26-29 Maunsel Street, London SW1P 2QN, E-mail: [leonard.cheshire@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:leonard.cheshire@ukonline.co.uk)**



Ronald Travers, chairman of the Foundation's Golden Jubilee Committee

will provide a marvellous opportunity to do this. So says Ronald Travers OBE, chair of the Foundation's Golden Jubilee Committee.

"It is a great privilege to be leading the Golden Jubilee Committee, but I need everyone to play a part if our exciting plans are to happen," says Ronald.

"The Golden Jubilee will do two things – first, it will celebrate the life of Leonard Cheshire and the work he did with disabled people. Second, it will establish a place for the Foundation for the next 50 years.

"This is an excellent opportunity to take a look at ourselves and our profile, in depth. For years I've heard moans about nobody knows what we do – we're old-fashioned, Victorian. If those accusations are not true, we are not getting the message across – so communica-

tion is not a bad place to start," he explains.

"Our age is something to be extremely proud of – something worth celebrating in itself – but the jubilee's primary aim must be to raise public awareness. Of course fundraising is important too, but the emphasis must be on increasing our profile."

Ronald sees raising awareness among people aged below 50 years old as particularly important.

"It is always a problem for an organisation run mainly by middle-aged people to communicate to younger people. We must tackle this – if an Oasis concert at Knebworth is what is needed then we must do it!

"The Foundation needs to get into schools in order to educate children about our work. We should use celebrities that younger people

can identify with to get our message across, such as pop stars and presenters of children's television programmes."

When he talks about the Foundation raising public awareness, Ronald does not just mean managers and directors, he means *everyone* – staff, volunteers and service users.

"It will be disastrous if the jubilee is simply a centrally-run public relations exercise. Everyone must get involved – all services throughout the world. Work at central office will generate international media attention, but at the most it will be a short mention on the television or in the press. Local services must get involved to generate local publicity and interest."

"In the past, people have tended to take a parochial outlook, but we must remember that

Looking to the future: the Foundation's Isle of Wight Care At Home Service is working with the island's South Wight Housing Association and Social Services at newly built Nippert Court in Newport (*centre*). Clients receive 24 hour support while enabling them to enjoy living in their own homes (*right*). In May, the Foundation broke new ground as it assumed responsibility from Derbyshire Social Services for the running of four day services (*left*).



the UK Foundation and the LCF International are part of the same organisation. We must think and act as a worldwide Foundation during the jubilee celebrations."

Of course Le Court Cheshire Home in Hampshire, England, will be the only service that will actually be celebrating its 50th birthday during the jubilee year. Ronald does not see why this should deter other services from getting involved.

"Newer services and services outside the UK will be able to use their attachment to a 50 year-old, worldwide organisation to publicise the services they provide."

Ronald believes the rights of disabled people will be, as always, a priority for the Foundation in 1998.

"Emancipation still goes on and its not complete yet. We must use the Golden Jubilee to keep up the pressure. Let's go into 1998 determined to offer as many choices and opportunities to disabled people as we can."

**T**he objectives of the Foundation's Golden Jubilee, as approved by the National Executive in June, can be summarised as follows:

- To relaunch the Foundation to best support disabled people through providing choice and opportunity.
- To rekindle the spirit of internationalism within the UK Foundation and world-wide.
- To develop new projects in the UK and internationally that demonstrate the above points.
- To raise funds from voluntary and statutory sources.
- To raise public profile particularly to target audiences – disabled people, statutory purchasers, supporters, volunteers and donors.
- To develop sustainable public awareness and fundraising programmes.

Several international and UK-based events are being planned to promote the jubilee's aims.

The hunt is on for a 'Golden 50' – 50 high profile supporters who will make a substantial donation and be our ambassadors during the year.

"The Foundation has enjoyed the backing of many people over the years, including top businessmen and figures in the worlds of disability, sport, arts and politics," explains UK public affairs director, Jeremy Hughes.

"The Golden Jubilee gives us a great opportunity to rekindle that support. At the same time, there may be people who have not supported us up to now, simply because we haven't asked them. The 'Golden 50' will be our top supporters for 1998. They will be asked to pledge both their time and money and will be featured on our Golden Jubilee promotional materials."

As part of the effort to attract celebrity support for the Foundation, Dominic Dowling and Katie Morris joined the UK's public affairs department as celebrity recruitment volunteers.

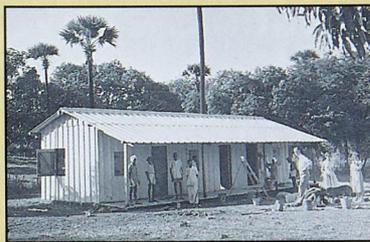
Volunteers will be working with the Foundation's press and public relations officer, Neil Byrne, to recruit celebrities in the run-up to the jubilee. Before contacting celebrities directly, they will be speaking to individual services to ascertain what celebrities they already have a relationship with.

If you or your service has worked with a celebrity, however long ago, please write to: Neil Byrne, The Leonard Cheshire Foundation, 26-29 Maunsel Street, London SW1P 2QN.

# Jill Roberts, guardian of the Cheshire Archives, highlights significant landmarks in the Foundation's history...

**ANY choice of special turning points in the story of The Leonard Cheshire Foundation has to be personal.**

Historians will take one point of view, a



Bethlehem Cheshire Home in Bombay, India: the first Cheshire Home built outside the UK

player in the events of time another, and those who are involved today look back and see something else again.

Here, I have tried to highlight special moments – or moments which seem so with hindsight. Difficult moments when decisions were made which were to have lasting influence in later years.

## The birth of the Foundation

The Foundation was born out of the arrival of Arthur Dykes at Le Court in May 1948.

Arthur was dying of cancer. Leonard Cheshire cared for him until his death and soon discovered the truth of Arthur's prophesy – that he was only the first who would seek his support.

Frances Jeram was a young almoner who, in 1949, became the first qualified helper at Le Court.

She remembers sitting with Leonard Cheshire, by candlelight in the darkened kitchen of the old house, listening to him talk about his vision for the future.

"As he did this I could see these little lights coming on and on and on in the darkness, almost into infinity," says Frances. She was persuaded to give up her job to help run the first of those "lights".

## Framework for the future

In 1952 the need for a more formal administrative structure for the Foundation was

recognised.

The Cheshire Foundation Trust was formed, with Leonard's father as one of the founding trustees.

The importance of delegation to the new Trust was something Leonard had to learn quickly when, later that year, he was diagnosed as having tuberculosis which meant a long period of convalescence for him.

## LCF International

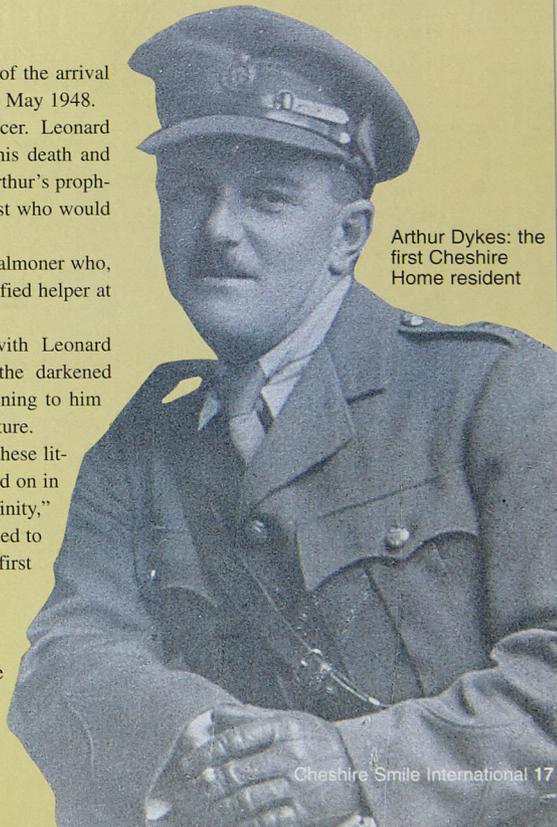
During his two year stay in a TB sanatorium, Leonard Cheshire received an offer to help set up a Cheshire Home in India.

On 1 December 1955, he travelled to Bombay. So began the success story that is today's LCF International.

By the end of 1960 there were 14 homes overseas to add to the 25 in the United Kingdom.

## Family Support Services

In 1979 the FSSs (now known as Care At Home Services) were established, offering support for people with disabilities in their own homes.



Arthur Dykes: the first Cheshire Home resident

# Year of the

As Hong Kong prepares to revert to Chinese rule for the first time in more than 100 years, PETER TAYLOR-WHIFFEN discusses what this means for residents of the territory's Cheshire Home



# D R A G O N

For the first time  
discovers what  
comes



It's 9pm on a Thursday evening and Hong Kong's world-famous Temple Street market is living up - or down - to expectations. Everywhere you go, people are selling whatever is saleable.

Caged birds sing, puppies look soulfully through the steel bars of their cages, doomed crustaceans scuttle around a table-top as restaurant-goers decide which one to order. Crowds, designer watches and mobile phones are everywhere - and Hong Kong is *exactly* as you'd expect it to be.

Up ahead is one of the many t-shirt stalls. One shirt depicts a benevolent China opening its arms to embrace Hong Kong with the words: "Welcome home". The garment next to it shows China clasping Hong Kong between a pair of chopsticks with the words "the great Chinese takeaway". No-one seems to be buying either.

But then, it's difficult to get members of the local Hong Kong Chinese population to commit themselves on the question. On June 30, 1997, Hong Kong will revert from British to Chinese governance for the first time in more than 100 years. Seemingly contrary to press reports over the last five years, no-one seems either excited or concerned. Or if they are, they're not letting it show.

Certainly the general belief is very much that life will go on as normal.

and nowhere more so than at Hong Kong's two Cheshire homes. Both Chung Hom Kok, on Hong Kong Island, and Sha Tin, about ten miles north of Kowloon, are part funded by the Hospital Authority, a quasi-autonomous non-government organisation which was set up some five years ago. It is thought this relatively new rung on the constitutional ladder between Cheshire homes and the government will act as a buffer to any changes - should such a buffer be necessary.

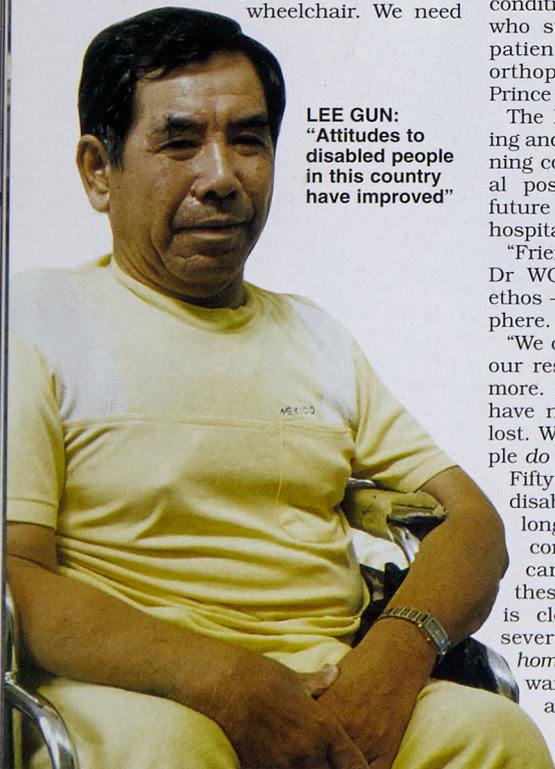
However, many people feel this buffer will not be needed - among them 66-year-old Lee Gun, who has been the chairman of Sha Tin's residents committee since coming to live at the home five years ago.

"Generally speaking I am not worried," says "Uncle Gun", as he is known to many of the residents. "However, I am slightly concerned that the monthly disability allowance will be reduced, or at least not be increased in line with inflation.

"It's the system that's important, not the people who run it. The allowance is not a lot, but the present system works."

**H**owever, Gun is not particularly impressed with Hong Kong's facilities for disabled people. "Transport is not very good and access is only okay in the new buildings. Attitudes to disabled people in this country have improved but there is still a lot of discrimination. Some people look at you strangely because you're in a wheelchair. We need

**LEE GUN:**  
"Attitudes to disabled people in this country have improved"



**BUSY TIME:** Residents at Chung Hom Kok make use of the home's activity room. Their new home, to be completed in early 1998, will include a bigger activities room as part of a "patient care centre".

to raise awareness and we need to raise the general standard of facilities for disabled people."

The facilities at Sha Tin Cheshire Home, however, are of the high standard you would expect of an orderly, well-run hospital - for that is what it is. The home is a clean, functional building which has spectacular views over the town of Sha Tin, being near the top of a very steep, mile-long hill. The Hospital Authority provided half of the funding for the home on the condition that 150 of the 300 people who stayed here were convalescent patients from the surgical and orthopaedic units of the nearby Prince of Wales hospital.

The Foundation paid for the building and the Authority pays for its running costs - putting it in the unusual position of having its financial future assured. But what makes a hospital a Cheshire home?

"Friendliness," says chief executive Dr WC Ip. "We follow the Cheshire ethos - it's a warm, personal atmosphere.

"We offer motivation and encourage our residents to believe they can do more. If you have potential, but you have no motivation, the potential is lost. With belief and confidence, people do achieve more."

Fifty beds comprise the "severely-disabled wards", which are home to long-stay residents who require continuous medical and nursing care. The difference between these and the convalescent wards is clear - to the people on the severely-disabled wards, this is home. Many of the 25 beds in each ward are covered in cuddly toys and at the side of them are books, games and even computers. One resident, Law Fun, types one of the home's

leaflets in Chinese. Typewritten Chinese is a very specific skill which needs a lot of patience and concentration and Fun is much better at it than many of the staff.

**T**he residents are distinguishable from the convalescent patients not only through their more homely environment, but by their clothes. Residents wear their own clothes but patients tend to favour the white hospital garments. There are two reasons for this - firstly, the patients believe anything they bring into hospital is vulnerable to infection, but in any case, the hospital only does laundry for its residents - patients have to send their clothes home to be washed.

Nearly 100 further residents live on the edge of the hospital site in purpose-built, independent-living chalets. Each of the 16 chalets has three bedrooms and while most chalet residents move here from the local community, many have become independent after living on the severely-disabled wards.

"It is exciting to learn about looking after yourself and becoming independent," says Cheung Siu Lan, who has lived in her chalet since 1992.

"I manage to take care of my daily life and this is better than living at home. Sha Tin is spacious and you need that sense of your own space.

"It was difficult to get used to," she adds. "We have cooking facilities here but we can go to the main hospital for a meal. I do a lot of cooking here because I find it very hard to go very far on my own and it takes me a long time to return the hospital to my chalet. When I first moved here it felt like I took so long to return from dinner that it was time for tea!"

Siu Lan is enjoying living indepen-

dently but says residents must learn to speak up for themselves. "We're not very good at speaking up, because we are disabled and for much of our lives have not had the opportunity to learn how. I met residents from some UK homes during World Week in 1994 and I was impressed how much they are involved in the management of their homes because they have the confidence to speak up."

However, many residents are involved in the life of the home and many do tasks within the hospital. Residents from the chalets work in a shop, whose clientele is as likely to be hospital visitors as residents and patients. Wong Ping-Kwok teaches fellow residents to read and write and also teaches Mandarin to residents and staff. The local dialect is Cantonese and many people are keen to learn Mandarin, as it is expected much administration will be done in the language following the handover to the Chinese.

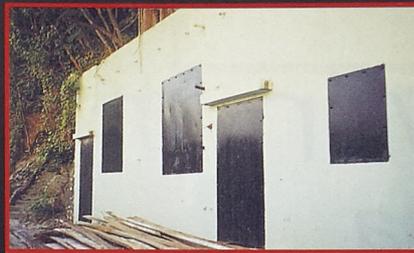
**W**ritten Chinese is on the timetable for many of the residents at Chung Hom Kok, who regularly attend the Macle hose Medical Rehabilitation Centre for people with disabilities on Hong Kong Island. All except one go to learn – the other resident who makes the trip is their teacher!

Chung Hom Kok has come a long way since its founding in 1961. The first five residents moved into disused gunners' camp of concrete block houses near Stanley.

"The surroundings must have been quite bleak," said Anita Chan, who became the home's chief executive three years ago. "We have come a very long way since then!"

Conditions were improved, the number of residents rose to 40 and the present home was built in 1977 – just 30 yards from the gunners' camps. The present home is set on three floors, two of which are occupied by the 60 male residents and the other by the 30 female residents.

"But now we're very excited at the prospect of the next phase," says Anita, referring to the current building work happening outside her office window.



**LOOK HOW FAR WE'VE COME:** Chung Hom Kok residents lived in disused gunners camps (left) when the home was first opened in 1961. Today's residents are looking forward to the completion of the new building (artists' impression below left), which is due to be completed in 1998, under the watchful eye of chief executive Anita Chan (below)



By this time next year a brand new building will have increased Chung Hom Kok's floorspace fourfold and its capacity from 90 to nearly 250 residents

The development is coming along well and the first phase, to be completed in July 1997, will include space for 150 beds and new physiotherapy and occupational therapy departments.

The plan is for residents to move into the building while the current building is renovated (Phase II, February 1998) to include a "patient care centre" which will feature a large hall, resource centre, beauty parlour and activities room.

"There is already a lot going on in the present home," says Anita. "This new development will enable us to offer a wider range of services to even more disabled people."

Anita, too, plays down the change of government. "Any government that's responsible will provide for disabled people.

"I don't know what will happen but I really don't think life will change a great deal."

So life is likely to carry on as normal in Hong Kong after next summer.

The high standard of care and service in the Cheshire Homes certainly will.

Life will go on – and the t-shirts look set to remain unsold.



**ENJOYING INDEPENDENCE:**  
Cheung Siu Lan

## SO WHAT HAPPENS ON JUNE 30 – AND WHY?

On June 30, 1997, Hong Kong will revert to Chinese rule, having been a British colony for more than 150 years.

China ceded Hong Kong Island to the British 'in perpetuity' in 1841. The agreement formed part of a treaty after China failed to block the import of opium, in the first of what became

known as 'the opium wars'.

Within 20 years, a further treaty ceded the Kowloon Peninsula to the British 'in perpetuity' and in 1898, China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war resulted in Britain claiming substantial land north of Kowloon – the New Territories – by way of a 99-year lease.

In 1982 British prime

minister Margaret Thatcher began talks with Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping over the expiry of the lease.

Although the lease referred only to the New Territories, China also claimed Kowloon and lucrative Hong Kong Island, which both sides knew would not be as economically viable without

the New Territories.

After two years of discussions, the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984 confirmed the return of the whole of Hong Kong to China in 1997. China published the Basic Law Act in 1988, which guaranteed that citizens and institutions in Hong Kong need have no fears about the future.

# A day in the life

## Barcelona

### ROUTINE

TODAY, Monday, has been different from other days as at the first hour I had a visit from my husband telling me that last week he had had a call from our son.

The title I have called this piece, "Routine", does not fit with what I have done today, as it has been so joyful that I have to have a different title.

Yesterday was also different, we had a "sardinia" organised by the Neighbours Association and all the neighbours from from the Pla d'en Boet district were there.

I am in the habit of writing in a note book, where I put all that happens to me - so many outings, such as excursions, people I have met. Since I have been going out I have begun to meet more people.

Also I made a journey to Lourdes. On this journey I met a woman who visits me whenever possible, although she is in a wheelchair and has to wait until one of her sons can bring her.

Leaving the sad moments behind ... I am going to tell of yesterday, the surprised face of the man who held my plate, to see the quantity of sardines I ate - seven in total plus a large slice of bread.

**IN the first of a new series, disabled people talk about their everyday lives as users of a project run by the Leonard Cheshire Foundation. In this issue, residents talk about a day in the life at the Barcelona homes in Spain**



Next Sunday a trip to Sabadell is planned.

With spring arriving we have more opportunities to have outings both long and short, long ones such as going to

Montserrat, and short ones such as going to the port, the market etc. We have also been to IMAX to Port Vell and to the Aquarium in Barcelona, where everything is another world.

### A day of Francisca Ros Torres

*IN the morning I get out of bed. I shower, I dress and I go to breakfast.*

*For a while I do the tasks around the house, such as working in the workshop, lowering the blinds, in the afternoon watering the flowers and plants of the garden and the patio.*

*Also on Saturdays I am accustomed to helping in the kitchen peeling potatoes and other things.*

*If it is Tuesday we go on an outing.*

*Some of my companions come for the whole day, others until midday.*

*I am very happy because the vehicle of the house comes to collect us and it is easier to get into and out of. Moreover, the driver, Pedro, is very nice. Pedro makes our lives very pleasant.*

*Also I go to the cinema with my inseparable friend, my wheelchair, since without it I would not be able to get from one place to another. I have spina bifida which has caused me great problems in finding work, especially as having had it since birth, I was not able to go to school.*

*For this reason a volunteer teacher gives me lessons every Monday and Thursday morning.*

*My desire is to learn much and also to write lots of articles such as this.*

*I would like to be successful, but what is important is to take part and to have hopes in life.*

**Francisca Ros Torres**



### A day in my life

ON June 3, 1996 it was five years since I moved into this beautiful and hospitable residence called "Parc Serentill".

I have chosen one of the most normal and ordinary days of my life, although there are many others when, for example, the staff organise a party and we all have an entertaining time.

I have always risen early and continue to do so, taking advantage to wash and

arrange my things in my room according to my limited physical capabilities. Since they operated on my spine and arms and hands they have little mobility.

I give thanks to God, for each morning after breakfast I go out for a walk and I also help with little errands for the residents and staff, such as buying the newspaper, posting letters, buying stamps ...

On my return I read the paper and go for a short while to the gym for some exercises for my arms. Then I go down to eat and

then up to my room to pass the afternoon watching television and reading.

Later I go down for supper and return to my room to watch the news and go to bed at the 10pm to pass a good night.

That is my day. I believe it is important in this life to be well with yourself, to always think about the positive things that God gives us, never the negative things, as there are days of everything, good days and not so good days.

**Sra Soledad Cercos Piera**

**HAPPY FAMILIES:** Marilyn and Jan Jansen, residents at the Cleary Estate Cheshire Home in South Africa, are expecting their first baby.



**Birds do it, bees do it ...  
even disabled people  
do it – despite everyone  
telling them they shouldn't**

**SPECIAL REPORT by MARTHA ROBINSON,  
JUDY GRAHAM AND PETER TAYLOR-WHIFFEN**

# What's **love** got to do with it?

**B**IRDS DO IT, bees do it ... even disabled people do it. But you'd never believe it in a society where disabled people falling in love is considered at best a curiosity, at worst unnatural – and in any event, something which shouldn't be allowed.

Building a relationship with someone seems forever to have been a taboo subject for disabled people.

Well, that's not exactly true – it's never been a problem for disabled people, but it has often been a touchy subject for friends, families, carers, staff and volunteers.

The idea of a friendship involving one or more disabled people blossoming into love, marriage and – horror of horrors – sex has been frowned upon and in many cases actively discouraged.

*But why?*

It seems to centre around the idea that people with disabilities are incapable of feeling emotions. Able-bodied carers, relatives and even service staff who have known a disabled person for years as someone who is an excellent conversationalist, or has a good sense of humour, often believe it is in some way unnatural for that same disabled person to have emotional feelings towards another person.

But if on the one hand we want disabled

people to be seen for *who* they are, why do we think it's wrong for them to display one of the most natural reactions known to the human race?

Is it a case of well-intentioned friends making decisions on behalf of disabled people, to the extent that they never have the opportunity to express themselves?

Alet Bosman, administrator at the Eric Miles home in Capetown, South Africa, lectures on the subject of human relationships involving people with disabilities.

"People talk about relationships involving disabled people and automatically think of sex," she says. "But sex is a long way from many people's minds when they start to form a relationship.

"The first stage is always to meet someone and that throws up the first question. If, as carers, we are helping to dress someone who is meeting a person individually or as part of a group, do we go that little bit further in helping to make them as attractive as they could be? If it doesn't occur to a man to put on aftershave, do we suggest it? Does it occur to us? Do we offer to shave under women's arms? Or do we as carers consider it to be too much trouble to suggest it, and deny them the opportunity to look as attractive as possible?"

**B**ut in many cases, it's when a friendship forms and the happy couple become close – and one day, start to look at each other in a different way – that tongues start to wag.

When Derek Alder first met his future wife Sarah, there were many obstacles to their relationship getting off the ground.

Sarah, who was born with spina bifida, was a 16 year-old girl living in a home for young disabled adults in Banstead, Surrey. Derek was an able-bodied 20-year-old. The staff at the home did not like it, and said so.

"It was all right when I visited the home as a volunteer, but when it became clear I was just visiting Sarah, they told me to leave.

"They thought I might take advantage of her. They did not like the idea of an able-bodied man seeing a disabled girl. They would not let me on the premises until I had her father's permission."

Derek was visiting Sarah when they started courting, but what happens when disabled people at the same home start a relationship?

Do we help our residents enough? Do we help them too much? And frankly, is it any of our business anyway?

Unfortunately perhaps, in a residential home the answer to the third of those questions is quite often "yes". If a relationship is going on between two people who share a home with 20-plus others, perhaps it's inevitable that it affects the life of the other residents, to a greater or lesser extent.

But it's *only* our business if it causes disruption to the lives of others and sometimes, in a Cheshire Home, that's unavoidable.

One couple, Alan and Sally, were called in to their head of home's office because their displays of affection in the dining room were causing embarrassment to other residents. The couple claimed they were only kissing – and the dining room was the only place in the home where there was room for them, chairs and all, to embrace. They said their own rooms weren't big enough.

There is inconsistency throughout the



TEN YEARS AFTER: Sarah and Derek Alder relax at home with their family

worldwide Foundation when it comes to residents sharing rooms with their partner. Some homes are quite happy for this to happen, others not at all and others still, only if the couple are married.

This can bring problems, particularly if such an arrangement offends another resident – for example, someone whose religious or moral convictions make it difficult to accept that there is an unmarried couple sharing the room next door. The couple may claim the

her staff's confidential advice is only open to those residents who make the first move and suggest they need it, she encounters problems with their families.

"One of our residents went home to mum and dad and started talking about it at home," she says.

"The next thing I know, the family is on the telephone threatening to withdraw their son because he never had these feelings before he came to the Cheshire Home. Of course he did



***'Staff at the home did not like the idea of an able-bodied man seeing a disabled girl. They would not let me on the premises until I had Sarah's father's permission'***

right to live their life as they choose – but so may the neighbour.

However, if the neighbours do not object, and the accommodation is available, is it right that the moral stance of the head of home or management committee denies a couple the right to live as they choose?

Many people in authority choose to ignore such situations, some finding comfort in perpetuating the myth that disabled people are simply incapable of having an emotional, much less sexual, relationship.

Sheila Fenton is head of home at Pound House, Surrey, where residents have learning disabilities.

"Some of our residents have found this is the first environment in which they have been able to talk about their feelings," she says. "Some have done so with guilt and shame. We have helped them to learn that these feelings are perfectly natural.

"So many of our residents – some of them in their forties – thought there was something wrong with them for having these feelings. We have helped them to understand them and the social responsibilities that inevitably come with them."

However, even though Sheila stresses that

– he simply never understood why."

There are certainly homes whose "permission" for residents to live together has caused consternation among families, staff, volunteers and other residents, who accuse the home's management of encouraging sexual activity and promiscuity.

Alison Dowring is 32, has cerebral palsy – and a nine-year-old son by Josh, one of her fellow residents. While her relationship with the father is now in its 14th year, they hardly see their son, because he is being brought up outside the home by her sister's family – who have never approved of the relationship.

"Nobody would believe Alison was pregnant," recalls the head of home. "She had all the symptoms and went to hospital for other reasons, but the doctors refused to do any tests because they thought there was no way she could be having a baby.

"She was six months pregnant by the time it was confirmed."

**T**he couple conceded that provision could not be made for a baby in the home and young Daniel was adopted by Alison's sister. The baby was brought to see the couple every week

# Advice and useful reading

for the first two years of his life – but then the visits stopped.

"They just fizzed out," says Josh. "The visits got more and more rare – we haven't seen Daniel for nine months."

This, say the couple, is because Alison's family think Josh in some way corrupted her.

"But I wanted the baby," says Alison. "I love my son and I love Josh." She has also admitted since Daniel's birth that, far from being corrupted, she stopped taking contraceptive pills so she would deliberately fall pregnant, to persuade a reluctant Josh to marry her. Nine years on, he is still refusing to tie the knot.

Some families get used to the idea – Derek and Sarah Alder now have the support of both their families, but when Derek asked Sarah's father for permission to marry her because she was pregnant, he was thrown out of the house.

"He was horrified that we were having a sexual relationship," says Derek. "Sarah was still his little girl. He said he would have nothing to do with the wedding or anything."

Within weeks, Sarah's father had relented. The couple have now been married for 10 years and have three children.

It has been just as hard for Graham and Heidi Vaughan, who were living together in a purpose-built flat in Newport, Isle of Wight, before their marriage this summer in the town's Methodist church.

Their big day was marred by Heidi's rift with her mother.

"Her mother thinks Heidi is a vegetable," says Graham, 26, who was born with spina bifida and is blind. Heidi had part of her brain removed 10 years ago to treat severe epilepsy, and the operation left her without the use of her left arm and partially sighted. "She thinks of her as a little girl who cannot do anything for herself," says Graham.

"When Heidi was with her mother she would not say boo to a goose. Her mother ruled her life and did everything for her. But now Heidi is able to think for herself, speak for herself, and make decisions for herself. Since Heidi and I have been together she has changed from a timid girl into a woman."

"My mother has cut me off," says Heidi. "She did not think I should get married as she thought we would not be able to cope. She wanted me to stay at home so she could look after me. But I did not want that."

When Heidi's mother could see that Heidi and Graham were in love and determined to be together, she offered to convert her garage so the two of them could be under her wing.

But they would have none of it. "Living in a converted garage and being looked after by my mother did not give us the independence we wanted," says Heidi. "We wanted our own place and to live our own lives."

They put their names down on the council housing list. Heidi's mother said they would not be able to manage on their own.

The couple sought the help of the Social Services, the Housing Department and The Society for the Blind – and are now supported by the Foundation's Care At Home Service.

"They were all very helpful," says Heidi. "There was a meeting where they told my mum we could manage. She said they were telling lies. That was the last straw."

It is often difficult for families and friends to come to terms with a blossoming relationship making some disabled people, who have

**SPOD** (The Association to Aid the Sexual and Personal Relationships of Disabled People) is a UK organisation that provides advice and information.

It has a country-wide network of counsellors and may be able to put you in touch with someone you can talk to locally.

*SPOD, 286 Camden Road, London N& OBJ, tel: 0171 607 8851.*

**British Deaf Association** offers people with a hearing impairment information and support about sexually transmitted diseases, safer sex, sexuality, pregnancy and contraception.

*British Deaf Association (BDA), 38 Victoria Place, Carlisle CA1 1HU, tel: 01228 48844 (voice); 01228 28719 (text); 01270 250736 (healthline).*

**Brook Advisory Centres** offer advice to young people at centres throughout the UK. They also have a 24-hour confidential information service.

*Brook Advisory Centre, National Office, 165 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8UD, tel: 0171 833 8488; helpline 0171 713 9000; 24hr. computerised helpline 0171 617 8000; fax: 0171 833 8181.*

**DISCERN** offers counselling to people with physical and learning disabilities on issues around their sexuality and personal relationships.

*DISCERN, Suite 6, Clarendon Chambers, Clarendon Street, Nottingham, NG1 5LN, tel: 0115 947 4147; Mansfield, 01623 23732.*

The **Spinal Injuries Association** has welfare counselling services which provide counselling and advice on sexual and personal problems and to put people in touch with one another.

*The Spinal Injuries Association, 76 St James's Lane, London N10 3DF, tel: 0181 444 2121, fax: 0181 444 3761; counselling line 0181 883 4296.*

**Young Arthritis Care** is for people under 45 with arthritis. It has a nationwide network of over 80 contacts, all of them young people with arthritis.

*Arthritis Care, 18 Stephenson Way, London NW1 2HD, tel/textphone: 0171 916 1500; free helpline 0800 289170 (Monday to Friday, noon to 4pm); fax: 0171 916 1505.*

**Genetic Interest Group** (GIC) is concerned with issues of genetic disorders and co-ordinates groups specialising in particular disorders.

Its information service can put people who are

worried about passing on disability to the next generation in touch with useful local contacts. *Genetic Interest Group, Farringdon Point, 29-35 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3JB, tel: 0171 430 0090, fax: 0171 430 0092.*

Disability Now newspaper's telephone counsellor, **Lin Berwick** can give disabled people and carers advice and support on personal problems.

*Contact her on 01708 477582 on Thursdays 1pm to 5pm and Mondays 6pm to 10pm.*

The **Family Planning Association** provides information and advice on contraception and sexual health. They can also give you details of your nearest source of family planning help and advice.

*The Family Planning Association, 2nd Floor Rear, 16 Mortimer Street, London W1M 7RD, tel: 0171 436 3304, fax: 0171 436 3288.*

**Relate** offers counselling to married and unmarried couples with relationship problems. It has 126 centres throughout England and Wales, some of which have counsellors who specialise in working with disabled people.

*Relate (formerly National Marriage Guidance Council), Herbert Grey College, Little Church Street, Rugby, CV21 3AP, tel: 01788 573241, fax: 01788 535007.*

**Sexuality booklets** ('Heterosexual Woman', 'Heterosexual Man', 'Lesbian' and 'Gay Man') are a series of four books published by The Spinal Injuries Association.

Each book is written for people with spinal injuries and cover topics such as alternative sexual positions, making love after an injury and self image.

*£6 each (free p&p in the UK) from The Spinal Injuries Association, 76 St James's Lane, London N10 3DF, tel: 0181 444 2121.*

**Learning to love: a set of simple booklets on sexuality** by Jane Fraser, are a set of five illustrated booklets for people with minimal reading skills. Subjects covered include how a baby is born, puberty and adolescence, contraception and family planning, making love, sexuality and health and infections.

*£12.95 (plus £2.50 for p&p within the UK)*

**Sexuality, learning difficulties and doing what's right** by Gavin Fairbairn, Denis Rowley and Maggie Bowen, explores the right of people with learning disabilities to form relationships and have families.

*£12.99 (plus £2.50 UK p&p). Both from Healthwise, The Family Planning Association's Book Service, 2-12 Pentonville Road, London N1 9PF, tel: 0171 837 5432.*

always had every decision made for them, vulnerable to pressure from protective families.

Robbie Lloyd is 30 and recently got engaged. He has cerebral palsy, as does Carol, the woman who became his fiancée. While Carol's mother lived 300 miles away from the home and took only a passing interest in her, Robbie's mother was against the marriage. His brother Brian stepped in to make the peace.

"While Robbie was with Carol, he desperately wanted to get married – he had a fierce row over the phone about it with Mum," says Brian.

"But then he came home for a while. Within a few days he'd decided that this marriage of which he had talked incessantly wasn't really such a good idea after all and he wanted to call the whole thing off."

Things reached a head when Mum asked Brian to help Robbie to end the relationship.

"She asked if I would prompt him with things to say to her while he rang her up and told her it was all off.

"I refused – I invited him round and said: 'Whatever you do, I'm 100 per cent behind you.'"

But first, Brian asked his brother some questions. "I asked him if he loved her. I asked him why he'd got engaged. I asked him why he wanted to break it off. He got very flustered and refused to talk about it.

"Perhaps I was a bit of a bully, but I knew that he would do whatever I told him – so I had to ensure he was making this important decision on his own, having thought through all the reasons. It seemed to me that when he was with Carol he wanted to get married, and when he was with Mum, he didn't."

Robbie refused to talk about the subject for days. Two weeks later, he waited until he was on his own. He broke off the engagement.

"Mum rang up and said 'Isn't it wonderful news?'" says Brian. "I said it was good news, not because he'd broken off the engagement, but because he had made his own decision after thinking things through on his own.

"It would have been just as good news to me if he'd got married, as long as that was what he wanted. It was never any of my business – I just wanted to ensure he made the decision for himself."

At Cleary Estate in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, Marilyn and Jan Jansen are preparing for the birth of their first baby – with the full support of their families. The couple, who are both paraplegics, first met in a hospital waiting room, but didn't get to know each other

# Match of

Jenny and Maurice first met in 1967. They didn't like each other until  
Martha Robinson met the couple at their June wedding at St

## Saturday 8 June, 9.00am

Jenny Munt's house in Rustington, West Sussex is a hive of activity. The front door is being decorated with white and purple flowers, the finishing touches are being made to the ribbons on the wedding car outside and a pack of curious ducks has gathered in the driveway.

Jenny is deputy head of care at St Bridget's Cheshire Home in West Sussex. Her home is an open-house this morning as bride

Jenny Connell and an entourage of wedding guests and bridesmaids curl their hair, put on

make-up and slip into white and mauve dresses.

Jenny arrived half an hour ago and is waiting to get 'tarted-up'. "I only had a piece of toast for breakfast this morning," she explains, "I couldn't eat I was so nervous. I didn't get much sleep last night either."

## 9.15am

After finishing a cup of coffee, Jenny asks Jenny Munt to pour her a glass of something stronger – both indulge in a celebratory drink of champagne.

## 9.30am

Friend Leigh Bartlett arrives to do Jenny's hair. She sets to work right away with her hairdryer, mousse and curling tongs. Jenny gets the giggles – they may be caused by pre-wedding nerves, excitement, or even the champagne, but whatever it is at the root of them, they make Leigh's job even harder.

"I am not going to be able to tong your hair if you carry on laughing," she warns.

"Are you going to be traditionally late for the wedding Jenny? You have got to keep the man waiting," jokes Leigh. "Of course I will," replies Jenny.

## 10.00am

The bridesmaids arrive – care worker Leslie Prentice and her two daugh-



properly until Marilyn came to visit a friend at Cleary Estate, where Jan lived. They were just good friends for a long time until they eventually started going out together – and within a few months, Marilyn realised she was pregnant. It was quite a shock.

"I thought my disability meant I couldn't fall pregnant," says Marilyn. So did Jan, who already has two other children.

"My mother was also shocked," adds Marilyn. "But once she'd come to terms with it, she was very happy for us both. My father's only condition was that we got married – but we'd planned to do that anyway. This just brought the wedding forward."

Marilyn's family are devout churchgoers

and she has stayed away from the church since becoming pregnant. However, when the baby is born she intends to return there to accept what she describes as her "punishment".

The couple were married at the home in May. About 200 people came to the service and Jan's family contributed to the cost.

However, the baby will not be born in the home. Jan and Marilyn have signed a written agreement saying they will move out a month before the baby is due, because a new-born baby is something the home cannot yet cope with.

Instead, the couple will move to Marilyn's family's house, where a cottage has been built

# the day

...er much. 29 years later, they fell in love and got engaged.  
 at St Bridget's Cheshire Home in West Sussex, England.

ters Natasha and Tanya, and Jenny's key-worker, Joan Hogan. Joan has made the bride and bridesmaid's white and purple flower bouquets.

Sandra Brown also arrives. She has made the bride's wedding dress and honeymoon outfit and the bridesmaid's dresses.

Jenny's dress is a plain white tunic with pleats and small mauve flowers on the bodice. Jenny's favourite colour (if you haven't guessed already) is purple, this explains the mauve floral print used for the bridesmaid's dresses and the mauve ties to be worn by the men at the reception.

## 10.15am

Jenny Munt and Joan put a blue garter on Jenny's left leg. That does it – Jenny is off in another fit of laughter, quickly followed by another sip of champagne.

The wedding photographer and other guests arrive.

## 10.40

Jenny leaves for St Bridget's in a purpose-built car decorated with white and mauve ribbons tied on the bonnet. The convey of wedding cars sets off.

## 10.50

The foyer at St Bridget's is packed full of wedding guests eager to catch a first glimpse of the bride as she arrives.

Jenny and Maurice have invited over 200 guests. They include residents and staff from Chiltern Cheshire Home in Gerrards Cross where Jenny and Maurice first met in 1967.

Maurice lived at Chiltern with his first wife, Elizabeth. "We did not get on at first," explains Jenny, "Maurice used to call me all the names under the sun."

Jenny moved to St Bridget's Cheshire Home in 1995. Following the death of Elizabeth, Maurice left Chiltern and also moved to St Bridget's. It was there that the couple became good friends. "Maurice has

changed a lot since his wife died, he really wants companionship now," explains Jenny.

"One afternoon we had just finished our lunch and Maurice said he had something to ask me. He said "will you be my wife?" and I said yes. I never thought I would get married. I wanted to when I was younger, but I had resigned myself to the fact that I was going to be an old maid."

## 11.00am

The wedding ceremony begins. Geoff Sloper, a member of staff at St Bridget's, gives Jenny away, while Jamie Clapton, another member of staff, is Maurice's best man.

Jenny gets another attack of the giggles when she says her vows and both her and Maurice make the guests laugh with their very loud and enthusiastic "I do's".

The ceremony is conducted by Fr. Paul McMahon and the Rev. Ken Masters – Chaplain to St Bridget's. The guests sing the chosen hymns including "Bind Us Together, Lord" and "Walk With Me Oh My Lord".

## 12.00

The end of the wedding ceremony is marked by the ringing of bells - the bell ringers of St Margaret's Church in Amaring play "Bells of St Mary's" and other songs.

After posing for their wedding photographs, Maurice and Jenny begin an afternoon of partying – having their photograph taken by all 200 guests, chatting to friends and family and tucking into the huge buffet laid on by St Bridget's staff in the marquee in the garden.

"The ceremony went really well," says Jenny, "Just how I had wanted."

## 3.00pm

Jenny and Maurice leave for their honeymoon. Jenny is unaware of her destination as Jenny Munt and Maurice have secretly planned a week away for the couple in a John Groom's hotel in Wales.



Leigh Bartlett adds the finishing touches to Jenny's hair style



The colour purple: Jenny and her bridesmaids



Jenny admires her new ring during the ceremony



St Bridget's catering staff made the impressive wedding cake

with the help of a grant for which Cleary Estate helped the couple to apply.

Andy Underwood says he faced "no opposition whatsoever" from the family of his wife Danielle.

The couple met in 1990 when they were working in adjoining offices at the Ontario Ministry of Education.

"We started at the company at the same time, became friends and started dating about three months later," says Andy, whose spinal cord was injured in an accident in 1985.

"The first time I was invited out with Danielle's family, she told them I used a wheelchair – it's important that people know in advance because there are practicalities you have to consider, such as access, etc.

"I was nervous about meeting them, but that was mainly because they were my girlfriend's

family. Having said that, I drove myself to meet these people and it takes time for me to get out of my car. There was soon a crowd of about ten people watching me put the ramp down and emerge. They hadn't seen anything like it before and I felt like I was giving a performance."

The couple married in November 1992 and live in an apartment in the Toronto suburbs.

"I don't think either of us proposed to the other," says Andy, who is the manager of the Foundation's Tobias House project in the city. "Our lives together just sort of blended into marriage and we're very happy together.

"You can find prejudice anywhere if you really want to go out and look for it. I can think of only one incident where I was discriminated against and that involved one individual.

"If somebody can't accept me as a person with a disability, I'm certainly not going to lose any sleep over it and neither is Danielle. Why should we?"

Relationships involving disabled people remains such a taboo subject that Smile has honoured requests to change the names of some of the interviewees in this feature, who fear recriminations from their families.

# Painting by numbers

WorldTeach volunteer *EVA DAY* explains how brightening up a blank wall forever changed her perception of disability

**T**HE CHILDREN of Namibia's Anamulenge Cheshire Home like to dance for guests. And so it was one afternoon in January 1995 that, after much whispering, one girl announced to me in English: "We want to sing and dance for you."

It was my first week at Anamulenge, and I was the new American WorldTeach volunteer for the catholic mission. "I would like that very much," I replied.

The children assembled themselves beneath a tree in the yard. Then to the beat of a traditional drum, one by one or in pairs, the girls and some of the younger boys danced on the warm sand.

I sat on a bench

watching, trying to smile but fighting tears that threatened the corners of my eyes. There was Julius, moving expertly, perfectly in rhythm in spite of one artificial leg. Magdalena, who will never be much taller than the few feet in height she reaches now, with her beautiful grin, full of perpetual laughter. Miriam, whose back is twisted with scoliosis and whose limbs are mere bones from early polio, danced in a full leg brace and black shoes. Ndapewa smiled shyly as her two artificial legs struck the ground, kicking up small clouds of sand. And Leonata, the youngest of all, giggling and dancing on one crutch.

It was the first time I had ever seen so many children with physical disabilities and I was struck by their sense of movement. Here they were dancing and full of joy! And when they finished dancing, they began to sing. After they finished with Namibia's National Anthem, I went back to my house touched by their spirit and feeling they were much more whole than I.

My job as a volunteer brought me to the mission to work with a rural women's English project. However, because the project was in transition, moving toward administration by the

local women, it meant I was not always kept busy. Happily, I became involved at the Cheshire Home as I looked for ways to fill my time.

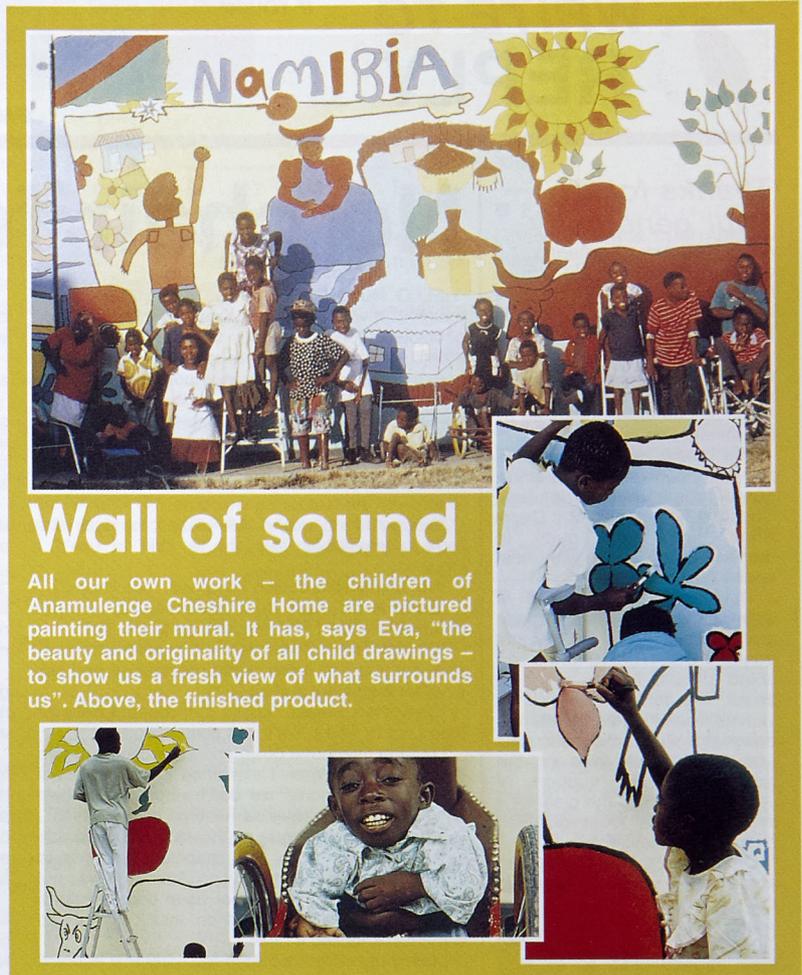
At the suggestion of Namibia's project director last year, I undertook the painting of a mural with the children. I began with a drawing session one afternoon. All the children sat in the dining room with large pieces of paper and coloured pencils, creating their pictures. The littlest ones competed for my attention, calling "Eva! Eva!" and I made dizzying rounds of the table to admire their work. It was late in the day and the sun went down as the children worked feverishly and with great pride on their pictures.

Once this first step was completed, I sketched a plan of the wall, choosing different parts from the children's pictures, trying to include work from everyone. With the help of a nearby British volunteer and artist, Nicholas Coughlin, the work was then put onto the wall in pencil. Paint and supplies were purchased with donation money from Europe, and after months of delay, the painting finally began one warm Saturday morning. Painting in shifts, each child was given a part of the wall to work on.

We listened to music from a cassette player as we worked, and the children danced on the cement walk after they finished their shift. The paint fascinated them and afterwards, they even enjoyed cleaning the brushes in water. Though their first painting experience was chaotic and the children emerged paint-spattered, their faces were endless smiles.

Now as you enter the front gate of the mission, you can just glimpse the mural through openings between buildings. It pops up like puppets from a playhouse in a burst of warmth among the other nondescript buildings. The wall has brought a lot of attention from local people as well as from visitors to the mission. Some ask why the people on the wall have no eyes, why the faces are empty or why the Namibian flag has no star in the corner. In administering the project, I felt that above all it was essential to ensure the children felt a sense of ownership of the mural, and to maintain the integrity of their original drawings. I let them choose the colours they wanted to use, and only made occasional suggestions. The pictures were put on the wall as closely as possible to the way the children sketched them.

The mural represents for me the spirit of the Cheshire Home here at Anamulenge. Full of joy and life. The pictures are a reflection of how the children see the world and the fact that they are *different* from what some might say is "real life", lends the beauty and individuality of the mural.



## Wall of sound

All our own work – the children of Anamulenge Cheshire Home are pictured painting their mural. It has, says Eva, "the beauty and originality of all child drawings – to show us a fresh view of what surrounds us". Above, the finished product.

It is the beauty and originality of all child drawings – to show us a fresh view of what surrounds us.

Over the past year-and-a-half, I have grown to feel a part of the Cheshire Home. Each day I spend time with the children, I feel my life enriched. They often greet me by calling my name and running to take my hand. When I am discouraged about how my English classes have gone, or feeling lonely and homesick, I have only to walk across the mission to see the children's faces and all of it dissipates into smiles and laughter.

There is a sense of closeness here among us all. As the children are away from their families, they develop strong bonds with one another. They look after each other. They each have responsibilities and work together to maintain and care for their home. But in addition to the work, there is a lot of laughter, there is singing, dancing and joy. Still, it is impossible to forget that they are children away from their families. Sometimes there are tears and they long for the comfort of their mothers or siblings. When there are

squabbles, when they are hurt or sick, they miss the love *only* a family can adequately bring.

As I reflect on my experiences with the Cheshire Home, I am filled with many emotions and memories. I think of the many evenings I listen to the children singing as I sit on my doorstep at twilight. I think of how nervous I was when I first met them, of my shyness of their disabilities. I think of the many times since then that I have watched them dance and perform for other visitors, as I wondered how they were perceived.

These days as I watch the girls pounding grain, or when I watch them playing ball; when I watch Julius ride a bike, I marvel at their adaptability, how they use the skills they have and their ingenuity to function at tasks I once took for granted. I rejoice at how they excel. The children have transformed me. These days when I look at the children – instead of with tears, my eyes are filled with love and admiration. As my year-end departure looms ever closer, I hope that after I have gone, they will look at the mural and reflect on the distance we travelled together. And feel joy.



# WRITE TO REPLY

IF YOU HAVE ANY NEWS OR VIEWS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE, PLEASE SEND THEM TO: WRITE TO REPLY, CHESHIRE SMILE INTERNATIONAL, 26-29 MAUNSEL STREET, LONDON SW1P 2QN, ENGLAND OR FAX ON (0044) 0171 976 5704. E-MAIL: LEONARD.CHESHIRE@UKONLINE.CO.UK

## Thanks for all your generosity

AN earthquake registering 7.0 on the Richter scale struck Lijiang and Zhongdian counties in Yunnan Province, China, at 7.14pm on February 3, 1996.

The quake brought heavy casualties to the two counties which are remote and poor mountainous areas inhabited by the minority nationalities.

The quake has drawn extensive attention from the international community. Japanese Cheshire homes and Mrs Diana Khoo have been quick to respond to the quake with messages of sympathy.

The residents and staff of three Japanese homes immediately started raising money and donated US\$4708.10 to the disabled people in the worst-hit areas. The donation heightened victims' confidence and determination to overcome difficulties and rebuild their lives on the ruins. With the support of Japanese friends, the disaster's impact on the local disabled people was alleviated.

On March 21, the 320,000 disabled people gratefully accepted the relief fund, saying they would always remember their Japanese friends' kindness and they eagerly wish to express their heartfelt thanks to Mrlmai, Mr Minoru and all the residents and staff of the three Cheshire homes for their generosity and kindheartedness.

Guo Zhiqiang

# No chair for Donna

"HELLO Ruth, this is Jenny. Is it still on about tonight?" It was my friend Jenny on the telephone, phoning to confirm about the evening arrangements. A few friends were coming round to my house and then we were going out for a meal at a restaurant. "Will it be okay if I bring a friend?" she continued. "The thing is, she's able-bodied."

I immediately started thinking of just how this unknown person was going to get into my house without doing herself an injury and then what the reaction of the restaurant would be.

"Is your friend totally able-bodied, or does she have a wheelchair that she is able to use?" I inquired.

"No, totally able-bodied I'm afraid," she replied.

"So what do I have to do about seating arrangements and what if she needs to go to the loo?"

"Oh, don't worry," said Jenny. "I'm sure we'll manage, but you had better tell the restaurant and ask whether they have a chair."

"Okay then," I said. "Leave it to me and tell your friend not to worry. We'll sort something out."

I put the telephone down and immediately dialled the restaurant. When I explained my predicament they said: "I'm sorry, we don't serve able-bodied people and in any case we have no chairs."

I decided not to argue as this kind of limited attitude was so typical of the disabled community to those in a less fortunate position. After all, it was not their fault that they had either been born without a wheelchair or had incurred an injury which had somehow knocked it off.

Luckily my other friend arrived early that evening and I was able to explain a little about Jenny's friend. "Donna is able-bodied but don't worry, this doesn't affect her brain." My other friend had never been around the able-bodied and so didn't know what to expect.

"Is she able to talk?" asked my friend. "And what does she do about the toilet and how will she cope with your doorstep?"

I didn't know the answers to these questions so I said we'd just have to wait and see.

When Jenny arrived with Donna we were all quite surprised as she looked and dressed quite normally and, despite all her problems, had a brilliant sense of humour. She was so easy-going and chatted about her able-bodiedness freely.

We had a few problems getting her into the house and I think her back began to give a few problems after all the crouching down.

After a while we decided to go to the restaurant. "I'm sorry," I explained on the way, "but we are going to a different restaurant." I omitted to explain the reason for fear of offending Donna. I merely explained that it was fully booked.

When we arrived we had the usual problem of getting Donna through the low doorway and along the very wide, low-ceilinged corridor – and when we got to our table, we found no chair for Donna.

Finally the chair arrived. Donna was so interesting to talk to and she had experienced so much prejudice in her life but always made a joke of it, although she admitted feeling very lonely and isolated because of her able-bodiedness. She told us all how much she needed a boyfriend, but no-one looked twice at her because of her horrible legs.

As we were wheeled out, Donna had a very peculiar sensation in her bottom which lasted all the way back to my house. We then sat around drinking coffee and the pain seemed to be getting worse.

I phoned the doctor, who was absolutely dumbfounded when he examined Donna and announced: "I am proud to tell you, you are expecting a wheelchair!"

by Ruth Shearman (see page 4)

## We are a strong, progressive, realistic family

THE FOUNDATION is committed to a continuous search for ways to improve its recognition of the individual, and this magazine is no exception.

It is always looking for ways of better reflecting the lives of the many different people in different places who make up this tremendous family of ours.

I hope you will find the new look is successful in that search and that the news and views that appear in it, and will be in future issues, appeal to you and to more and more readers.

Much is happening in the LCFI family. New homes and services are opening, training develops, conferences are held and people's endeavours every day to rise to the challenge of our Founder's vision go from strength to strength. The world as it is, rather than

by  
**RUPERT RIDGE**  
International director,  
Leonard Cheshire Foundation



as it was or as we would like it to be, is faced up to and new ideas are welcomed.

In the two-and-a-half years since I took over from Ron Travers as international director, I have been amazed by the dedication and hard work of everyone I have met and by the sheer force of love, skill and energy that makes each one of our homes and services such a special, warm and friendly place or operation.

Every time I walk into a home or visit a

service it is, for me, like coming home.

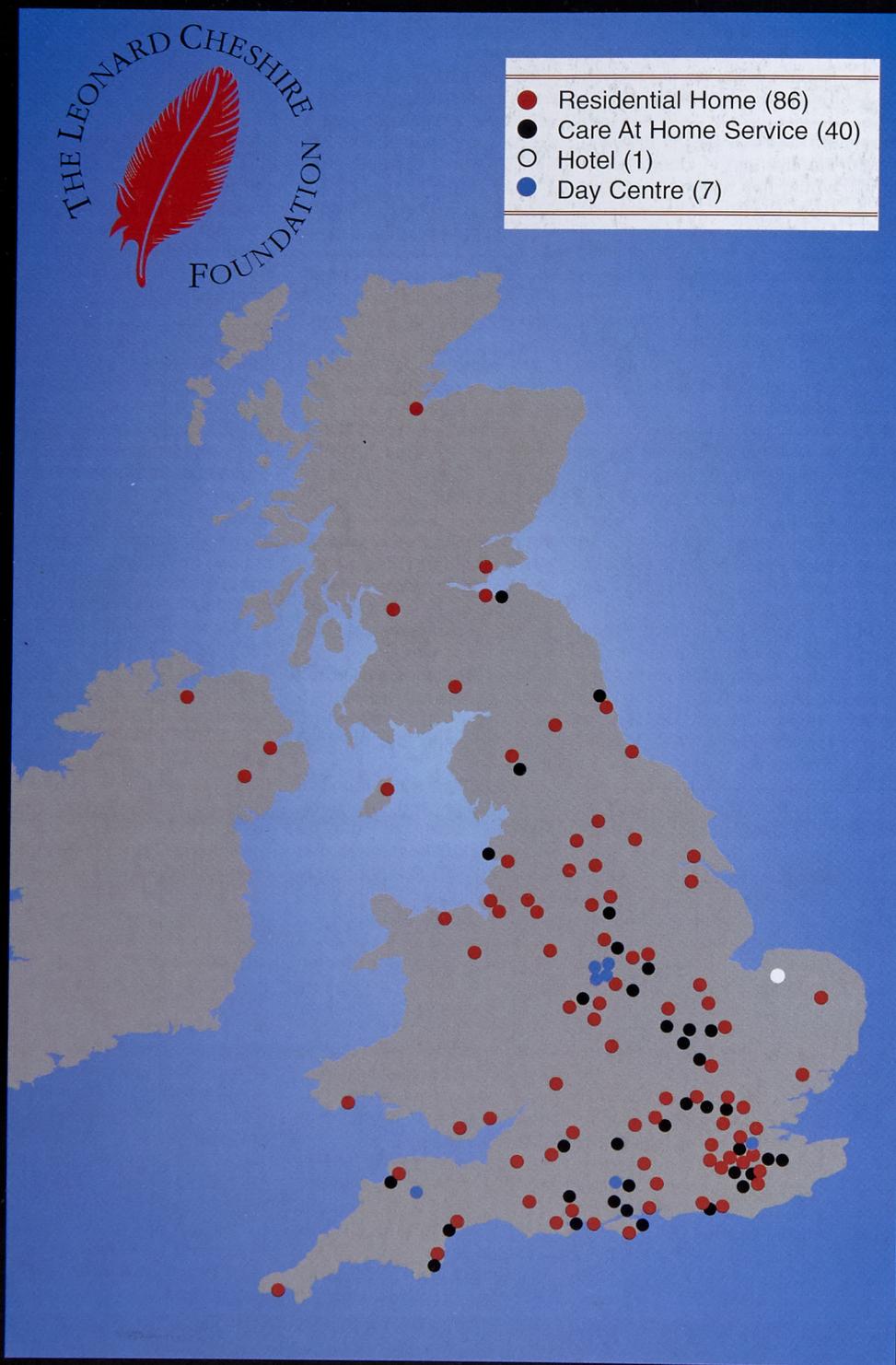
In October, the international chairman Sir Patrick Walker and I attended the Far Eastern Region conference in Jakarta (see page six). We were greatly impressed by the willingness of all participants to seize opportunities and to face up to realities – not all pleasant, not all easy.

The arrangements made for the conference by Brother Kevin and by the committee of Wisma Cheshire were excellent and the occasion combined real business with great pleasure. Sir Patrick also visited Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines and I visited Thailand, Japan and China.

We returned even more convinced of what we already knew – that this is a strong, progressive and realistic family.

# THE LEONARD CHESHIRE FOUNDATION

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