**Film Transcription**

**Rewind – Leonard Cheshire Disability, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund**

**Film Title:** No Limit

**Duration:** 19 minutes and 16 seconds

**Transcription Date:** 11th July 2016

**Archive Number:** N-607513

**Summary of Main Points**

0:20 Barbara Beesley informs on the purpose of the film about useful gadgets

1:04 Albert’s easel gadget for his mouth and foot painting

2:54 Albert’s membership to the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Association and the benefits

4:16 Barbara’s typewriter problems and gadget solution

5:54 Charles Derby starts a company called Independence Unlimited to provide gadget solutions

7:58 Barbara relays the advantages of the typewriter gadget for her fatigue and words typed per day

8:47 Frank Spas’ and his brother’s pursuit of inventing a wheelchair he could use

9:36 The range of movement for Frank’s wheelchair and machinery involved

12:46 Clive Gunnar’s pursuit of inventing an door opener that can be used by wheelchair users

13:46 The door opener’s technical aspects

15:48 Telephone gadgets

16:41 Various gadgets including a bell gadget, tap gadget and tray gadget

18:03 Tape recorder gadget and information on Le Court Film Unit

**Start of Transcription**

0:00 [silence] to 0:20

0:20 **Barbara Beesley:** Le Court is a Cheshire home. This film shows some of the gadgets which help the disabled people at Le Court, to lead active, purposeful lives. We hope it may help others with similar problems. Albert Baker lives here, one of 39 disabled residents. He was born with a deformity and can't use his hands. Only 5 of the 39 residents have unimpaired hands so there's an urgency in the drive to find new ways of doing things.

0:56 [silence] to 1:03

1:04 **Barbara Beesley:**Albert had a painting problem. He asked Charles Derby, a local engineer, for help. All the gadgets in this film are the outcome of co-operation between the residents and able-bodied people. The residents supply the need and often a good idea of how to fill it. Their friends provide know how and the means to putting it into practice.

1:29 [silence] to 1:34

1:34 **Barbara Beesley:** Charles gave a lot of thought to Albert's problem and finally wrote, “I think I have at last solved your problem. An apparatus which incorporates the support for your legs and a built in easel; it will be made to your exact measurements.” The easel and seat Charles designed and made is built of Dexion, a giant Mecanno like angle-iron invaluable for all sorts of structures.

2:04 [silence] to 2:10

2:10 **Barbara Beesley:** Albert pulls a loop of cord at waist level. This raises and lowers his canvas with practically no effort. The easel is drawn up by a cord that passes over a pulley and is attached to a counter weight.

2:28 [silence] to 2:44

2:44 **Barbara Beesley:**Extra weights are added to counterbalance heavier canvases.

2:47 [silence] to 2:54

2:54 **Barbara Beesley:**Albert had a 4 year apprenticeship with the Mouth and Foot Painting Artists Association, during which, they paid him enough for tuition and materials. He worked hard to improve his technique, sometimes as much as 10 hours a day. In July 1961, he was accepted as a member of the association and began to earn a salary. The following May, he flew to the association's congress in Vienna and his salary went up. Full membership entitles him to a handsome income in return for first right to any of his paintings. He submits at least 20 a year and the association's standard is stringent. There are at present, only 49 mouth or foot painting artists in the world who've achieved full membership. Naturally, it's an enormous advantage to a disabled painter to belong to such an organisation, which is run as a cooperative and has an international marketing network. It's doubtful if Albert would have ever have made the grade without his special easel. Before he had it, for every 3 weeks he worked, he had to rest 2.

4:16 **Barbara Beesley:**I used this old typewriter for years, it was hard work but I could manage it without help. I type with a stick with a rubber on the typing end and a dinky toy lorry wheel half way up, to prevent it slipping through my fingers. The most I could do in a day was 1500 words, but that was very tiring because there was not only the effort of hitting the keys but leaning forward to press the carriage return lever and manoeuvring the typewriter too.

4:49 [silence] to 4:53

4:53**Barbara Beesley:** At Le Court anybody who can and will work is in great demand and soon 1500 words wasn't nearly enough.

5:01 [silence] to 5:07

5:07**Barbara Beesley:**I heard that reconditioned electric typewriters could be bought cheaply through the Polio research fund by any disabled person who can't manage an ordinary machine.

5:17 [silence] to 5:23

5:23**Barbara Beesley:** After waiting a few months I was able to buy one. This was the beginning of a new set of problems. The electric typewriter was so massive and the carriage return so bound, that unless the table was locked to the chair and the typewriter fixed firmly to the table the machine and I parted company with remarkable speed.

5:46 [silence] to 5:54

5:54 **Barbara Beesley:**Stan Coten, who's in partnership with Charles, took on the typewriter problems. He's still working on an idea for an automatic paper feed. Stan and Charles have a small factory 3 miles away. After he had made Albert's easel, Charles started a voluntary organisation at Le Court called Independence Unlimited. There was such an obvious need for a concerted effort to overcome the limits set by physical handicaps. He and a group of other men meet in the workshop here every Tuesday evening. Their numbers fluctuate but we've had a garage owner, a farmworker, electricians, a schoolboy, carpenters, fitters and so on. They service the wheelchairs, in itself quite a job since 32 of the 39 residents are chair-borne. Later in the film, we shall show some of the other gadgets they've made. The idea forming a group could be copied anywhere. Every district has its disabled. Every district has able-bodied men of goodwill and skill and common sense. There are holes drilled in the chair arms with metal sleeves and holes to correspond in the brackets Stan has fixed to the table. Smaller brackets on the table top will hold the typewriter immovable.

7:31 [silence] to 7:34

7:34 **Barbara Beesley:** Pegs hold the table brackets in position.

7:37 [silence] to 7:40

7:40 **Barbara Beesley:** Metal reinforcements welded into the corners help the canter lever table to support the 46 pound machine.

7:48 [silence] to 7:58

7:58 **Barbara Beesley:**Once I got used to using a different typewriter at a different height my maximum in a day doubled to 3000 words and my fatigue halved. A problem nobody had foreseen was that the keys were too easy to the touch. Hitting 2 keys at once made them stick fast.

8:18 [silence] 8:21

8:21 **Barbara Beesley:** An extra plate over the keyboard made it impossible to hit more than one key at a time. A carriage return button is often hit by mistake. I can't reach the carriage so a hand lever, operates a ratchet on the carriage and a turns back the platen.

8:47 **Barbara Beesley:**Frank Spath was immobile for 25 years. His brother Jack, a commercial artist whose hobby is engineering, was sure that Frank could drive an electric chair. Frank has no grip in his hands so he couldn't drive a single engine type with a tiller control, but some chairs have engines on both wheels like tanks so they'll turn to left or right by bringing in one engine or the other. Jack was determined to invent a control that Frank could manage with his very small range of movement.

9:26 [silence] to 9:36

9:36 **Barbara Beesley:**Jack's home is at Falmer, 40 miles away. The standard model electric chair was sent there and he worked on his ideas for months. There are 8 electrical contacts to relay into a control box, giving movement forwards, backwards and turning, if necessary on the chair's own axis. It was a difficult problem with many complicating factors. At last he did find a solution, the [unclear 10:09] metal box had 8 brass contacts on the floor and an arm which Frank could press down, move sideways.

10:17 [silence] to 10:27

10:27 **Barbara Beesley:**Green for forwards, red for reverse. A desk prairie fitted with a reversing mirror completed the ensemble.

10:37 [silence] to 10:40

10:40 **Barbara Beesley:** The control box is on an arm which folds out of the way when Frank isn't driving. A switch turns the engines on.

10:48 [silence] to 11:06

11:06 **Barbara Beesley:**Independence of movement is one of the things able-bodied people take for granted. It brings a new dimension and indescribable freedom to anyone who's been stationary for years. Frank is the editor of the Cheshire Smile, the official publication of the Cheshire foundation. It's a quarterly, printing 7500 copies an issue.

11:34 [silence] to 11:43

11:43 **Barbara Beesley:**He can push the door open coming in but has to ring for help to get out.

11:48 [silence] to 12:19

12:19 **Barbara Beesley:** A mechanical door opener is what Frank needed which could be opened by bumping against a bar switch.

12:25 [silence] to 12:46

12:46 **Barbara Beesley:**Months ago Clive Gunner, a garage owner and one of the original members of Independence Unlimited, undertook to devise a motor driven door opener. His prototypes he put on the workshop door where it was so invaluable that he had to leave it. He's still struggling to build an improved model for Frank's room, hampered by continual interruption from other jobs.

13:12 [silence] to 13:23

13:23 **Barbara Beesley:** Arthur's coming to fetch the motor for the door, a retired gramophone motor actually.

13:30 [silence] to 13:46

13:46 **Barbara Beesley:** The door opener is also worked by an ordinary switch inside the workshop, a cord runs from a huge cotton reel to the door pulling the handle down and then winding in the cord. A switch cuts the motor when the door is wide open and the door is gently closed by a spring.

14:15 [silence] to 14:20

14:20 **Barbara Beesley:** Brian opens doors with his stick, for years the outer lift doors wouldn't stay open and it would've cost 700 pounds to install automatic ones. It cost 5 pounds and the ingenuity of a member of Independence Unlimited to rig up a transformer, solenoids, door blocks and micro-switches into competent alternative. The micro-switch on the door frame operates the wooden blocks which rise letting the doors fall shut.

14:59 [silence] to 15:20

15:20 **Barbara Beesley:**Tanya's door opening gadgets saves her a lot of time waiting for other people to do it for her.

15:27 [silence] to 15:38

15:38 **Barbara Beesley:** The door closing device is even simpler.

15:40 [silence] to 15:48

15:48 **Barbara Beesley:** Telephoning is difficult to do independently. A first step is a receiver holding arm.

15:56 [silence] to 16:08

16:08 **Barbara Beesley:**If there were no holder, Nipper would have to get someone to hold the receiver for him, limiting both the length of the call and what he could say on it.

16:18 [silence] to 16:41

16:41 **Barbara Beesley:** This bell is for someone without grip or feeling in her hands, it's a hinged hardboard box with a micro-switch inside. A lever instead of an ordinary handle makes the tap 10 times easier to turn.

16:58 [silence] 17:04

17:04 **Barbara Beesley:** This tray is very light and easy for the owner to lift on and off, it's made of Dexion and plywood

17:10 [silence] to 17:15

17:15 **Barbara Beesley:** Another sort of tray fitment; the tiller is removed from a mono-drive electric chair and the table support substituted.

17:26 [silence] to 17:37

17:37 **Barbara Beesley:** Without these footrests the occupant of the chair was terribly uncomfortable.

17:42 [silence] to 17:46

17:46 **Barbara Beesley:** This is the last of our gadgets.

17:49 [silence] to 18:03

18:03 **Barbara Beesley:** Brian got to the stage when he could no longer manage the controls of his tape-recorder. So Charles made him a spanner; a length of Dural tube with grooves at either end and a piece of bamboo to increase leverage. Given the tools, there is no limit to what disabled people can do.

The members of the film unit would like to thank the many people who have helped them make this film. The members are: Laurie Mawer the cameraman, Barbara Beesley the secretary, who wrote and spoke the commentary and Neville Thomas the producer and Brian Line the sound technician, who together cut and edited the film.

19:01 [silence] to 19:16

**End of Transcription**