**Oral History Transcription – Daphne – Chipstead Lake**

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

**Filmed** – 2016

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: How did you get involved with Chipstead lake?]

[Daphne]

00:00:10 - I was a school teacher, and I got involved with Chipstead Lake because in Sevenoaks we've got a voluntary service unit, and the school that I taught in was part of that. And there there'd been some noticeable organised talk about Leonard Cheshire, that he came, and they opened it up to all the schools to go and that's when I first heard about the Cheshire Homes.

00:00:35 - Way back before the home was opened, that is in the early

1970s, all the schools in the VSU were involved in fundraising, and we had a thousand children in Knole Park, doing sponsored walks. Went out there and served orange squash and ticked their cards at intervals. It was hard work.

00:00:54 - The hardest job was getting the money from the girls after they'd done the walk. They loved doing the walk. But then they had to go around their friends and collect the money, and I had to chase them up until they'd got most of it in. That's the hardest bit.

00:01:07 - When the home was opened, because I was working, I used to come once a fortnight on Sunday afternoon, and with another volunteer we made the tea, this was for supper. Cheese on toast which we burnt our fingers on the grill, we were allowed to use the kitchen, do things like that.

00:01:26 - So, the month I retired I said I would come one day a week as a volunteer. Well, it's a short day, so I come Fridays, from half past nine till about three o'clock.

[Text on screen: What do you do on Fridays?]

00:01:39 - All sorts of things, really. Making cups of tea and coffee, talking a lot. And let me think, I help one resident always at lunchtime, or perhaps more because I sit on a table and help the people at that table.

00:01:55 - All sorts of odd jobs like a bit of mending for people, and sewing on name tapes and things of that sort. And then joining the activities, like the pottery, which we're doing this morning.

[Text on screen: How has Chipstead Lake changed over the years?]

00:02:09 - It's changed completely, yes, because when it was set up, in the 1970s, you only had a Cheshire home in a town, if the local community would raise the funds, and agree to run it, and we had a very strong management committee in Sevenoaks, who were very efficient, who ran it. And then there was a house committee who dealt with the day to day running. And for many years that's how it went on, but, all sorts of things have changed over the years, partly from the changes in society in general, partly government rules and regulations, the charity commissioners set down more and more rules, and so gradually it's turned much more into a centrally-run charity, and the old ways committees were disbanded.

00:02:57 - So we haven't got the local connection now, it is run as a charity from headquarters. But I think it's partly circumstances, society has changed, and we've had to go along with that. There are far more rules and regulations now, but I wouldn't have been allowed in the kitchens to do cheese on toast nowadays, without a certificate to say this, and then you know, this is beyond our control.

[Text on screen: What is the volunteer team like?]

00:03:24 - There's a nucleus of volunteers who've been around a very long time. And we've got far fewer volunteers now than we did have, again, it's a change in society, because most women are working now, and the time when we started there was a pool of ladies whose families were grown up, who hadn't got jobs and were prepared to do voluntary service. And now they're just not there, so, the volunteers are fewer, but we're still getting some very good ones.

00:03:54 - We still get some excellent young volunteers, who are still at school, and they're very good too.

[Text on screen: How do you feel about your experience of Chipstead Lake over the years?]

00:04:05 - You gain more by coming than you give, in a sense. That I would look forward to coming, it's a nice day, and I think that being with people, and they all become your friends, and you forget their disability, you don't notice it, you know, that's the thing. Because once you get to know them regularly like that, they're people, and they're no different than other friends that I see regularly.

00:04:30 - So, you don't become any different, because physically you can't do things, I think that's very important, which society on the whole doesn't always have the opportunity to learn, I think that's the thing. And it is important to come regularly, even if you only come for a short time, the fact that you're here every week. You can really get a relationship with people. So that's very nice.

**End of transcription**