**Oral History Transcription – Cynthia – Sobell Lodge**

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

**Filmed** – 2016

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: How did you start working for Leonard Cheshire Disability?]

[Cynthia]

00:00:10 - I went there at recommendation of a friend. I'd suffered quite severe postnatal depression after my fist son was born and she recommended I worked at Mote House. She thought I'd be a good carer, so my first day there was quite daunting.

00:00:24 - It was this big, old stately sort of home and I walked in, the heating wasn't working, and the first thing I had to do was spend the full day in a wheelchair because the manager then, who was Mary White, felt it was a good way of seeing how residents were living in wheelchairs and how difficult it was to actually move around in a wheelchair in those days.

00:00:48 - So, my first day was spent in a wheelchair. Thereafter, I moved on and worked onto nights as a carer. I've progressed throughout my career with Leonard Cheshire Disability, but mainly at Mote House, I was on night duties.

00:01:06 - [Interviewer] And were there any strange events that happened at night there? It's a very old building, wasn't it?

00:01:12 – [Cynthia] It was and we had what was called the Grey Lady. There was a ghost called the Grey Lady down the back stairs and you would hear things: bed pans falling off from the bed pan holders. People were frightened to go up the back stairs and I think staff probably scared each other: "Don't go up there because the Grey Lady's there." But I've got fond memories of Mote House.

[Text on screen: Did you ever meet Leonard Cheshire?]

00:01:35 - I was very fortunate to meet Leonard Cheshire on two or three occasions. He came to Mote House and the thing that struck me, the manager then, who was Anne Pring, has said to him, "Lunch is provided "in this room," and he said, "No, I've come to be with the residents," and he sat and had his lunch with the residents.

00:01:54 - He was such a gentleman. He'd come for the residents, he wanted to share the day with the residents. He wasn't going to be moved to another area to have lunch with the manager, the administrator, etc. He was there for the residents and, to me, that day told me all about Leonard Cheshire, himself.

[Text on screen: What’s your happiest memory from Mote House or Sobell Lodge?]

00:02:18 - I think, for me personally, is to actually see the residents who came from Mote House to Sobell Lodge and the change that it gave them that they had their own personal space.

00:02:34 - I think the camaraderie at Mote House was amazing because, as I say, there were four into a room and the laughter that went on in those rooms was just mind boggling and to be able to say to your colleague, "Can you come and help me lift" or "Can you come and turn," whereas now you have to go out of the room and find somebody or call, so there's the fors and the against.

00:03:00

I think Mote House was an amazing place. I think Mote, Sobell Lodge is more dignified for the residents. They've got their own space, they've got their own shower rooms, so it is more personal to them.

00:03:17 - I think the camaraderie and the fun that we had at Mote House, obviously things you can't do now. When people were leaving, we'd fill the bath up, we'd put soap suds in it and we'd bath them and they'd run up and down the cor... Things you can't do now because of health and safety. You wouldn't get away with it, but we used to have great fun and that's gone, but that's in the past.

00:03:38 - Moving on, I think it's wonderful that the residents have got what they deserve. And I think for those residents that moved from Mote House to Sobell, they can see the difference. They've got the community involvement.

**End of transcription**