**Oral History Transcription**

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

 **Participants:**

Jill Roberts, Archivist

Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick, founder of Heatherley Cheshire Home

 **Duration:** 48minutes 41 seconds

**Date of Original Recording:** 22nd May 1995 **Transcription Date:** 22nd July 2016
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**Summary of Main Points**

0:09 Introduction by Jill Roberts

0:33 to 18:15 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick recounts how she became involved with the Leonard Cheshire foundation, how her husband suffered from multiple sclerosis, also she describes how she set up homes and the difficulties she experienced in doing so.

18:17 to 20:54 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick discusses how she began to focus on holiday homes for the disabled.

20:55 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick discusses Cheshire homes abroad, initially, in Canada.

31:01 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick discusses Cheshire homes in Guyana, Jamaica & Barbados

34:09 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick discusses Leonard Cheshire himself. His personality, skills and religious faith.

38:34 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick discusses the impact of Leonard Cheshire's death on the Foundation.

42:26 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick finished with a short piece of poetry.

**Start of Transcription**0:00 No speech to 0:08

0:09 **Jill Roberts**: This is an oral history tape made with Mrs Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick, on the 22nd of May 1995.

0:24 **Jill Roberts**: Mrs Tredinnick, I believe you've been involved with Leonard Cheshire's Foundation since the early 60's...umm.. what was your first...how did it come about?

0:33 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Well it came about through my husband, who was a doctor, had been a night-fighter pilot during the war and did medicine after the war and ehh...he only ehh...had done nine months in general practice before he had to give it up because he had multiple sclerosis and we were searching around and just...investigating all possible avenues of future ways in which he might be able to work, even with the disease, within medicine the once allied...form...

1:05 **Jill Roberts**: Because he was a doctor?

1:06 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**:  Yes...umm...and he had gone into general practice but he had to give it up because his disease deteriorated very quickly so he was only nine months in practice and...uhh...we were left trying to find something that he could do and our parents were down for the weekend and we happened to be looking at television on Sunday night I think it was, and Leonard Cheshire came on talking about Le Court and uhh..this must have been... 19...59...late 1959 or 60...perhaps early '60...uhh...and my mother said "oh why don't you ring him up? Might be something you could...do with him, or for him" and so we rang the BBC...I rang the BBC and to my amazement actually got Leonard on the telephone there and then [1:55 Jill & Pamela laugh] and he was very nice and uhh...as a result of that, he took Ginger, as we called him, on to...umm...into his organisation and he appointed him as Royal Care Officer and this was wonderful for him to have something concrete to do and I think he was able to do a good job because he was a doctor and a patient and at that time he wasn't as bad as he became later on and he was able to live at home and...but he would go round to the various Cheshire homes...if they asked him to do so, either for the day if they were near enough [Unclear 2:29to 2:30 ]  ...or for longer periods staying in the homes perhaps for two or three weeks, helping with problems over administration or...umm...ehh...problems with individual residents and...umm...

2:40 **Jill Roberts**: And at this stage how many homes were there?

2:42 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Ahh...there would be about...ahh...

2:44 **Jill Roberts**: It was expanding rapidly wasn't it?

2:45 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick:** It was, it was expanding very rapidly. I should think there were sort of...perhaps nine or ten then. Umm...and he was...uhh...I became very interested in...ehh...I used to take him and fetch him to the homes and...uhh...I became very interested in what they were doing and the way in which they were doing it and each one, although...carrying out the ideals that Leonard had laid down were very different and belonged to the area in which they were situated and they were run by, managed by and paid for by the people in the local area and...ahh...I thought they were doing a wonderful job and there was still a great demand for more accommodation because then, in those days, there was no accommodation for the longer term, younger, chronically sick or disabled...other than geriatric wards so that, you could imagine how awful it could be...even at our age but let alone if you're sort of eighteen and you've had a motorcycle accident and you're forced to live...forty odd forty years of life in a geriatric ward and you have nothing to look forward to and nothing to do it's...

3:41 **Jill Roberts**: I think that's what inspired you to help...

3:45 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: That's right...that's what got us all going really and...uhh...there wasn't a Cheshire home in our part of the world, we were still living on the outskirts of Croy where, in Sussex, where his practice had been and so in a slightly slap-happy mood one day...umm...we...umm...dec...I decided it would be a good idea to start one 'round there and...umm...I borrowed a...a site at the local [Unclear 4:09 to 4:10 ] ...they gave me a site at the local fete committee [Unclear 4:12]...1960 in Crawley at the Carnival. And I went 'round to various other Cheshire homes and borrowed things that they made, the residents made and they put them on exhibition there and the children...umm...helped me to design a poster asking people to help us start a Cheshire home. And...uhh... my...ehh...parents came down for the weekend and we all had collecting tins, I had borrowed a tent from the sports [Unclear 4:37 ] to house this exhibition of things that had been made...emm...in exchange for a little notice on the outside saying 'this tent had been kindly lent by such and such'..

**4:47 Jill Roberts**: [Laughs] Sponsoring

**4:48 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes sponsoring and...umm...we were, we all had collecting tins, mother and father and the two children, my sister and myself and...umm...it poured with rain from the moment after the opening ceremony until long after it closed and we were the only side-show with any sort of a roof over it, so we did very well because people came in to shelter from the rain and they didn't get out without putting something in the collecting tins..ahh...and so we went home very wet and bedraggled and emptied these collecting tins on the carpet and found they had what seemed the princely sum then of 40 pounds, six shillings and eight pence [Laughs]. Ahh...and then, I mean...we were off, really, although...umm...I suppose It was...I suppose I hadn't really...thought about the difficulties which lay ahead...

5:33 **Jill Roberts**: I was going to say...

5:33 Both speakers talk over each other until 5:37

5:36 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: ...you just get terribly, fired up with the enthusiasm to...to do something which is of service to other people in that way where there was a great need and uh...and so I just tried to collect money and I tried to get local people interested in what we were doing and the rotary club locally, rotary club...very kind...and agreed to put on a public meeting for me, and Leonard Cheshire came down and spoke as a sort of double act as it were, and uhh...I got a local committee [6:05 She mentions the name of the committee but it is unclear], Leonard Cheshire of course knew what I was doing and...encouraged and supported it and uhh...we...emm...by the October of that year, we had started on May the 1st 1960, we had got nearly a thousand pounds...which was a lot of money then...

6:23 **Jill Roberts**: So you must have done a lot of fundraising, projects,..

6:26 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: We did all sorts of fundraising things and...umm...we had seen a house, I'd been looking at houses all this time and I found a house which seemed as if it might be suitable...on the outskirts of Surrey and Sussex and...umm...they wanted 10,000 pounds for it, the whole estate with the cottages and a lot of extra land which we later on had to buy, it was 12,500 but we couldn't afford that since we had only got 1,000 pounds...umm...and not quite that so...we decided that...they offered us the house and the little bit of ground around it for 10,000 pounds so I said "yes well, this will be fine" and...umm...I managed to talk a building society into giving us a loan of 7,000 and that left us with 3, and we have got the thousand as I have said, and I was desperate by this time to get the other money, I got 'till the end of whatever it was...September or something, to find it and complete the thing and...umm...I was really desperate and I happened to be at the hotel, I had been asked to speak at a another meeting and on the way out I was waiting in the foyer and there was a man...he wasn't with anybody and I said..."excuse me, you wouldn't like to lend us 2,000 pounds would you?"

7:39 **Jill Roberts**: [Laughs] Just like that?

7:39 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes and he was very overcome and shocked and I think, so surprised, that he said yes and he did and we were in business but we didn't have a penny to furnish or equip it. And...and uhh...we had to redouble our efforts to [Unclear at7:53] ...money and uhh...collect...or you know, furnishings and things that was given or we begged and borrowed and we didn't steal, but it was only for lack of opportunity I think: that was the only other reason. And we were able to open Heatherley on...11 months...on the 1st of May, 1961, the carnival committee was the 1st of June so we were 11 months from the day of first starting it. We opened it, with 11 residents and it's grown throughout the years and we've added bits and pieces to it, till it's as it is now with approximately 30 residents and applications still came in at an alarming rate and we still couldn't do anything about it we were still only scratching the surface of the problem, so...I wondered where else we could do something of a similar kind and...umm...I remember a lady who once said to me "If I [Unclear at8:41] around at Langton Green" which is just outside Tumbridge Wells, "will you come and build a home there?" and the idea seemed suddenly to be the right one umm...actually it wasn't because she was built on the top of a precipice and if anyone in a wheelchair who  had lost control would have ended up in [Unclear 8:57 ] at the bottom of a sort of ravine, also she decided that she wanted us to build **her** house in the grounds and let her live there rent-free. So the whole thing didn't work. But the place seemed right and so I started all over again in Tumbridge Wells and I got a committee together, it's quite separate from Heatherley, it's far enough away to appeal to a different section of people for money and support and voluntary help.

9:21 **Jill Roberts**: And did you have any problems, you say you...you...you say "I formed a committee" as if it must have been, much more difficult than that sounds...

9:28 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: "Mmm"

9:28 **Jill Roberts**: Umm...what do you think was the spark that made people want to be involved...what was the spark that made you want to be involved? ...Was it from Leonard Cheshire himself?

**9:38 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes it was from Leonard himself and...seeing the need which he saw and realising and understanding that...and admiring, so much, what he was trying to do and realising that this was the answer to this particular need and that there was no other at that time. And I think...the policy we always...I always had was to, try to show people what we wanted to do and **why**. And ask them to help us and threw ourselves on their mercy as it were, and they did in a wonderful way...yes fantastic sort of way so that, Seven Springs at Tumbridge Wells, became the second home of which I was involved and then one night Leonard rang me quite late on Saturday night and said, that he was going to speak at Seven Oaks school, the next day and that...umm...he wasn't well, he was in bed with flu and he didn't want to let them down and I was to go. And so I went and I was very apprehensive about this, it was at the end of morning service, the whole school was forced to attend and I was among...they had famous, big people speaking and they were all expecting Leonard Cheshire to be there, of course it was simply all my point of view, and we were standing up in this pulpit thing looking over...down the length of the church, every seat filled with people who didn't want to be there [Unclear from11:05 to11:08]. But...emm...the headmaster...emm...we went all down for coffee into the crypt afterwards and umm...it was after that meeting people came forward and offered to come forward and help me to get a home going in that area and that's when Chipstead Lake, eventually, came perhaps from the committee which was formed then.

11:29 **Jill Roberts**: So that's the third home...

**11:32 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: And then...uhh...some friends of mine who had been been involved at Heatherley moved down to the Isle of White and there wasn't a home there so they started again over there and we got applicants. So that's the fourth one in this country that I was involved with setting-up. ...Now, just very briefly, one of the things that struck me as very sad, was that there was nowhere that any of our people could go to for holidays in an ordinary sort of holiday environment. Umm...you know even if a hotel said that they would take wheelchairs they usually weren't really at all capable of doing it and there were steps up or the lifts weren't big enough to take a wheelchair and a lot of people didn't...uhh...didn't like...umm...the fact of having disabled people at the next table, you know the sort of thing, and it was because of this need that we set up the Farrell Trust, in order to...uhh...to...cater for this. Not only for Cheshire home residents but of course, largely for them as well, but for anybody else and that has gone on from that day to this. But before we actually got on to that, umm...there...I thought it was very sad whose husband or wife deteriorated to the extent that they couldn't manage them at home, they had to put them into an institution...because the facilities then for adapting houses which exist today, did not exist then and if your house wasn't suitable and the wheelchair wouldn't go through the bedroom door that was just too bad. And this happened in the end, eventually I couldn't manage Ginger at home at all and he had to go permanently into a Cheshire home, and I thought this was really awful and I wanted very much to do something about it and uhh...one day a couple came round Heatherley when I was there and I took them 'round and showed it to them and they were very interested and I didn't know who they were, I didn't know they were very wealthy, which perhaps was probably just as well, because I wasn't trying to catch [Unclear 13:29 to 13:30 ] ...second nature to me then. And we went...we ended up at the big windows overlooking the lawn at the side of the house, at which we had had the fete the week before and Leonard Cheshire had come down, to open, and I said "one day we shall have bungalows on there" and they asked their next question, I said we were going to have 12 bungalows in a horse-shoe shape, which would be specially designed for married couples, one of whom is disabled, to enable them to stay together...specially designed...and also the Cheshire home would be available unobtrusively, if required for day care or in case of emergency which would enable the fit one to go out to work to earn the money they would need to live on. They thought this was a very good idea and they asked "have you any idea how much it would cost?" "oh yes I said, I know exactly how much it would cost, cost 50,000 pounds"...twelve mind you...and uhh... I'll never forget the look on their faces, he turned to his wife and then he turned back to me and said "oh all right then we will give it to you". They did and he was very amused when, they were all finished, to have a cheque for 19 pounds..umm...54 pence or something as change.

14:44 **Jill Roberts**: The history of the foundation seems to be peppered with anecdotes like that, the right people, at the right place, at the right time...

14:51 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: That's right...it's all...there is so much of it that has really been, you know, really, in my life anyway, it's been a succession of miracles and it's no good people saying that miracles don't happen because in my life they have been an everyday occurrence if you look for them they're there. Anyway there was a slight snag because at that time the constitution of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation, only allowed for accommodation for the disabled person not the able-bodied one. And so, that was why we first of all made the Farrell Trust.

15:19 **Jill Roberts**: Oh I see

15:21 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: To, ahh...we did this with the...ahh...absolute agreement and cooperation of Leonard Cheshire and the Cheshire foundation...umm...who agreed with what we were trying to do and they let us have the ground at the side of Heatherley and a peppercorn rent and we [Unclear15:37]...  the trust, which was separate altogether, and we built these 12 bungalows. We didn't have the money to furnish and equip them but they were specially designed as [Unclear 15:46]...as we could, with every possible gadget. And, there was the problem of how we were going to finish, to furnish them. So one of things we were going to do was to collect green shield stamps because for each million green shield stamps we could get five thousand pounds which we needed to do each bungalow. And so we had an appeal on the telephone and the Daily Telegraph and it was a front page appeal, [Unclear 16:11 to 16:14 ] ...millions of green shields stamps and there was a picture of Leonard and me and...umm...we got them you  know, they came in from all over the country and there was an old man in Chatham for instance, who sat outside the one of the big multi stores, each Saturday morning until he got a thousand for each year of his age and he was eighty and he sent us eighty thousand. And it was in that way that we got enough money to furnish and equip each of them. And Princess Alexandra came down with Leonard Cheshire to open them and it won't matter now because the people involved are all dead but the first bungalow, I mean...this tale I'm going to tell you it was really very amusing at the time but the first bungalow was occupied by a couple, he was disabled, and they'd only been married about three weeks and it was the only one that was occupied [Unclear 17:05 ] ...Alexandra and Leonard Cheshire, and all the VIPs', we were all going to go into this bungalow, the people didn't mind, they were very pleased to have them all. And so, they were lined up outside this...man and his wife, you see and uhh...so I introduced them to the Princess and to Group Captain Cheshire and so the Princess said to him, "I hear you are just back from honeymoon, you must be very happy" he said "well it was much better with me first wife but otherwise it's alright" [Laughs17:33 ] which was confusing at the time...anyway...

17:37 **Jill Roberts**:  I'm sure the Princess reacted...

17:39 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: So that in fact...ahead of myself because we built these twelve bungalows there then we found that there was a great demand for families rather than just married couples. So we went on and leased the land at the back of Seven Springs and we built six houses...well, four houses and two bungalows but they are large enough for families with children and they have been occupied ever since by families, [Unclear 18:02 to18:04 ] , and they have worked very well. And it was because there was no where for these people to go on holiday that we didn't do any more housing developments but we went into the holiday field.

18:16 **Jill Roberts**: Which you used to run, don't you?

**18:17 Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes, yes we did. But...yes we got 17 holiday properties of various sorts and various parts of the country and we run that from home.

18:25 **Jill Roberts**: Wasn't there just,.. a question a moment, wasn't there a possibility of using a hotel called 'Corgates' in the Scilly Isles...for and a holiday home for residents at one stage?

18:34 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes there was but that didn't uhh...that didn't seem to come to anything, that wasn't to do with the Farrell Trust it was something that the foundation was looking into...umm...until Park House came along there wasn't any suggestion, really whether they had thought about it but there were suggestions...possibility of lending holiday accommodation but it was really so diverse from that which we were actually set-up to do that it was felt that we shouldn't go in to that. It was only, really, because...when Park House came along that it seemed that the best use to use that property for because of it's unique setting and to [Unclear19:11]  rather than making it into an ordinary Cheshire home.

19:16 **Jill Roberts**: That was special about it?

19:16 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes but that was a development, really, on it's own and it's been very successful one to maybe lord the others I don't know although the...umm...the demand has changed so much since the Care In The Community Act and care is becoming more and more community based rather than residential homes, I personally think that there will always be a need for residential homes in more or less the same sort of way because I think that...umm...of course people become very disabled to the stage where it's a nightmare trying to live on their own, even with backup support, but also they can be very lonely and isolated in the community, perhaps on a council estate or something where everybody's out at work or school and nobody cares...you know...about them and has nothing to do with them.

20:06 **Jill Roberts**: The Cheshire homes have always been designed to be homes in the true sense of the word.

20:09 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: That's right and we...we try to make available...uhh...every facility for them that they want to do. I mean a lot of our residents go out to further education, some take degree's and if anybody wants to do anything however disabled, you can help them to do it through Cheshire homes so that they live positively with a lot of choice over what they do. Anyway the two things in the Cheshire Foundation has developed, or is developing very much in the field of community care and respite care and care at home, in all sorts of different and exciting new ways. But I think that there must always be room for a wide spectrum of choice to the disabled individual.

20:50 **Jill Roberts**: Because the demand will always be there.

20:52 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: I'm afraid so.

20:52 **Jill Roberts**: [Unclear]

20:54 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Well I'm sure.

20:55 **Jill Roberts**: Could we emm, move abroad? Now, and I believe you were involved certainly in Canada, how did that come about and where and when was that?

21:03 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Leonard Cheshire had been in the Air Force with a chap called Ernie. And he...umm...was a lawyer in Toronto and then [ Unclear21:13 ] rotary club and every year they came over to...or he used to come for a reunion, 6th and 7th squadron, and every year he used to say to...uhh...to Leonard, you know, there is nothing in Canada please come over and see what you can do. And he never managed to get there and he got rather...fed up with this chap keeping asking him so one day he said "well, you can go" [Unclear21:35] so umm...I didn't this because as you said earlier on it's a very sophisticated and advanced country, much more so than we are in many many ways...

21:45 **Jill Roberts**: You'd have thought so...

21:46 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: And that to me seemed like the greatest impertinence to suggest that I should go in to Canada, say "you're not doing something right you should do this" and I didn't want to go at all and I tried to get out of it, no no he was adamant and so I was due to go and [Unclear22:01]...was going to, arrange for me to have an introduction to the rotary club and things like that....but...now I was trying to see what contacts I could get in this country, so I found a man who was a Canadian businessman, based in a firm in London just off the Strand. And he agreed, didn't give me his name, and I asked if I could go and see him, I though that I might be able to get some contacts, at least he would tell me [Unclear22:27  to 22:28], so I went and it wasn't a very nice day and he wasn't a very nice man and he said exactly what I thought that it was simpler and [Unclear22:38 ] ...to consider going and that there was a wonderful system for the 'Red Filler' which it is...they, they are...'Red Filler' is a [Unclear 22:45]...in Canada, of a an organisation called Medicare which is a thing which is...umm...it's...looks after all Canadian long term sick and disabled...and he said that there was this wonderful organisation and it was far superior to anything in this country and what the hell did I think I was doing and that was that. So, I went away, he wouldn't give me any names and he wasn't at all...he felt just the same as I did and so I went out and I was rather upset because it was still pouring with rain and I went back to the station, Charring Cross station I was going to and I was on the day ticket, cheap day ticket, and I couldn't travel between half past 4 and 6 or something...and I'd just missed the train and I'd got there for about a quarter to 5 and I didn't want to pay the extra to transfer my ticket so...I didn't know what to do...and then I felt as if there was a hand in the small of my back and I found myself being propelled through the swing doors of the Charring Cross Hotel and I've never done anything like that before...its you know, not the sort of thing in those days at any rate, I didn't think of going into hotels in London by myself I mean, you know it wasn't something that entered my mind particularly...but there I was into the foyer of this hotel and it looked just like a Cheshire home, it was full of wheelchairs and...I thought I was hallucinating or something anyway, I said to one of the people in the wheelchairs, and they were unpacking then...they had come off a big coach they were just unpacking and I said "Oh excuse me but are you a...please tell me where you are from...what you are doing" and so it appeared that they were on a three week tour, they were Americans, they were on a three week tour of Europe and they had done a week in Paris and they were doing a week in London, they had just arrived to do a week in London, they were in varying stages of disability, none of them frightfully bad but all of them, most of them, in wheelchairs. And...umm...so I said "are you all from the 'States?" "Yes" she said, "No one from Canada?" said I, no no, well from someone down...a few tiers along said "oh yes, there's Doris...Doris is from Toronto" so I said "could you tell me where Doris is?"  so she said "oh yes, well she has gone down...she has gone up to her room, she has just gone down the passageway now, she is probably in the lift", so I chased after her, got into the lift with this rather fat lady in a wheelchair and her helper, and I said "excuse me, are you Doris?" and she said "yes" and I said "you'll think I'm quite mad but you're disabled and you live in Toronto and have you everything you want?"..."Is everything, alright for you? Is it hunky dory, as it were" so she said "no, everything I want she said, I live in an upstairs flat and my wheelchair won't go through the door and I haven't been out for five years, this is the first time that I've been out and people have to carry me through the flat and down to the shops, I can't do anything, I'm entirely alone", so I...umm...she was [Unclear25:36] and it was an awful imposition and I said "well look, I want to come over and see if there is anything we can do to help people like you, what would you suggest...where would I start?" so she said well, she gave me the name of a woman called Mary Hodge, who lived in Toronto and she said she is the sort of lady in charge of...chronically disabled people and their sort of welfare work and she said "If you really get to Toronto, if you ring her she will help you and...uhh...suggest people that you might approach". Well, so then I went quite soon after that to Toronto and...

26:10 **Jill Roberts**: Another miracle?

26:11 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes, well ahh...and I was still terribly diffident about all this...and I had got a bed and breakfast room the first night...I didn't know a single soul apart from Mary Hodge and I hadn't contacted her before I got there, [Unclear26:24], and I booked a room...umm from, somebody had given me the name of this...people who took in bed and breakfast people and it was a place called Hamilton, well the airport said Hamilton and in my ignorance I thought this was...it's not the same at all, Hamilton town is about 40 miles away from the airport, but anyway...umm...they had agreed to give me a room for one or two nights and I was going to take it from there. Well they very kindly came to fetch me and when I got to this house I found that there were two young sons and a daughter and the daughter had moved out of her room to give it to me and was sleeping in a sleeping bag in her mother and fathers room and so they had given me this room and I went in there, very tired, very...umm...disheartened and afraid and apprehensive and everything else, you name it, and there on the...on the...dressing table in this room was a pink elephant and it was dressed in a pink beret on one shoe, big bolly skirt, big eyelid lashes, like this and I'd seen one exactly like it before and I picked it up and underneath it's first foot it was stitched, it said 'sold in aid of Heatherley Cheshire home, England'...

27:41 **Jill Roberts**: I don't believe it!

27:41 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes and I thought "well, it's not up to me to be prying"...

27:46 **Jill Roberts**: [Sighs] That is amazing.

27:46 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: It is amazing, isn't it? Absolutely amazing. Though you see what I mean it's, just an everyday occurrence.

27:50 **Jill Roberts**: Yes

27:51 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Anyway I umm...I then rang up Mary Hodge the next morning and I said "I've just come out from England and you're very involved with the field of disablement, could I come and see you?". I told her exactly what I wanted her about, so she said "well, the best thing for you to do is to go down as a...a conference of...people working in disablement in Ontario at Niagara this weekend and if you go there you will find everybody working in the field of disablement together, and you'll be able to collect all the statistics about the number of cases and what provision there is and everything else that you could possibly want...you have to go tomorrow. Friday. So I just got on a bus and I went to Niagara. And there I got...I went to this conference and there I met a fantastic woman called Mav Macleod and she umm...became very involved and umm...she and I worked for the rest of the time I was there to collect people together again trying to set up a steering committee...in my...ignorance of what was to come, really, I made a big basic mistake. In that umm...I set up a Cheshire foundation because what...if you go to a foreign country you...you set it up in that country when it is legally umm...set up in that country so that the country paddles it's own canoe, once it's set up we don't attempt to run it at all we try to...set up the organisation and then each country must take their own responsibility for it. And in my ignorance really, I set up the Cheshire Foundation of Canada Incorporated...and of course it slid in to some certain amount of trouble which I didn't realise at the time 'cause what I should have done is to have made it a Cheshire Home...Cheshire Foundation of Ontario Incorporated, not Canada. Because there's been a lot of difficulty about some of the other provinces wanting to come under that umbrella because it was basically in Ontario, but anyway that's a technical detail, anyway Mav and I got...terribly umm...swept up in a sort of umm...a world of excitement and one person led to another and we got a committee going, we set up the organisation and that has been a miraculous success in Toronto, there are now some 37 homes in and around Toronto, and many more coming up all the time. And they are very exciting, they're very...they've been very forward looking, they've got all sorts of accommodation which in many cases we don't have here for instance, they've also got contracts with all the umm...transport that they can have free transport on specially designed buses for wheelchairs and things like that which we don't do here, they have a marvellous taxi service which is available to the disabled as readily as ordinary taxi service...all these sort of things become very far reaching, you've got some homes for university students that are disabled and some which take a floor or an apartment in an apartment block, with all the facilities, some which don't have attendants but run their own...thing, you know.

30:59 **Jill Roberts**: So, there was a need?

31:01 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Of course there was a need..an...an amazing, overwhelming need. There was nothing except a geriatric ward at all, whatever that man said. So that was terrific, well...umm...and then one day he asked me if I would go to Guyana...

31:16 **Jill Roberts**: Is this, Leonard?

31:17 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes. I was to go to Guyana. This was my next trip...umm...Guyana again, there was an ex-RAF man living there and said it would be a jolly good idea for Guyana because there was nothing there. So off I went this time and he said "oh by the way, you can get a flight which enables you to have a stop-over on the way there and on the way back for the same price, so you can decide whether you'd like to go and see what's cooking there, and so...umm...I looked at the map...umm...oh yes, I was to call in at Jamaica, that's right, and I had a...I was to call in at Jamaica because there had been a movement to have a...a home in Jamaica which has not come to anything, and on the way back I could chose where I went. So, on the way back I had looked at the map board, I'd discovered that Barbados was one of the most densely populated area in that part of the world and umm...so I thought "that's one of the stops", so I would stop there and umm...in Jamaica we eventually got the Cheshire village going umm...which is umm...in spacious housing, yes, which we started as a a result of that visit. We've got the [Unclear32:22 ]...home for children going in Guyana at a place called Mahaico, which used to be a leper colony just outside Georgetown, and that's been going ever since and it's very successful. Well, when I was coming back...sort of tired and uhh...again rather dispirited because here again, I had no contact at all in Barbados and nobody had written to Leonard and said it would be a good idea or anything else, I didn't even have one foot in the door, and I booked in somewhere for about five days or something and umm...I got off the aeroplane very hot, rather tired and wondering what the hell to do next and I was laughed, I think, off the aeroplane and a woman came up to me and she said "excuse me, where have you come from?" so I said where I'd come and she said "oh are you from England?" and I said "yes" so she said "well would you mind coming with me? Because, there was an English V.I.P who was supposed to come off that aeroplane who hadn't got on it" but the reception committee was all waiting for this English V.I.P and would I go instead because they had nobody else. So of course, I went in front...straight in front of the television cameras at Barbados airport and I had the most wonderful quarter of an hour I could possibly ever have had [Narrator says something here which is Unclear33:33] and I had...an absolutely fantastic time those six days. Within those six days the Government had given me a piece of land, an architect had drawn up plans, I had lunch with the High Commissioner just before I went on the plane and had given us planning permission. All within six days, five days, or something. Just because whoever it was that was supposed to go didn't get there. You see what I mean?

33:55 **Jill Roberts**: Yes...yes...

33:57 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: So that was that. So that's the uhh...home for children in Barbados which has gone on...ever since.

34:03 **Jill Roberts**: And this was...was still 60's?

34:05 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Oh no that was much much later, 19...1970's. Emm...

34:09 **Jill Roberts**: What about telling me more to perhaps Leonard Cheshire himself? What...give me your, sort of impressions of him...as a person.

34:17 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Well he was a remarkable...a remarkable man, he was very umm...of a very laid back, very quiet umm...and very umm...rather ascetic looking...really...really very thin and gaunt looking at any rate, in the later years...he had got this funny tropical disease which he picked up somewhere in his...he didn't really...couldn't  get much nourishment from his food so he was very thin anyway. But he had the most tremendous sort of uhh...inspiration, I suppose, and spirit and a tremendous sense of humour which was not always obvious because it was very dead-pan.

35:00 **Jill Roberts**: Yes I've heard that before.

35:01 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes and...unless you knew him very well you wouldn't always realise that he was in fact being very funny. When you did know him very well, you know, you could appreciate this a little bit more I think. He had a genius I think, for, inspiring people with his...because he believed in it so much I think that...he was able to do that. He was also a very umm...perceptive man who knew I...I was with him once when he was talking to somebody who was very disabled and...he sort of said "well" uhh...and I can't remember what the conversation, how it had come...but I have always remembered him saying "well, if you can't do anything about it then you've got to make the best of what you've got" rather...he...I mean that sounds awful, he wasn't preaching or...but I mean he was sympathising with this man to say, well, you know, if there's nothing you can do about it then it's no good worrying about it in a way...it's no good worrying about it if you can't do anything about it...emm...I don't know...

36:06 **Jill Roberts**: So, he also believed in making the best of what you'd got?

36:09 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Yes. That's what I mean. If you can't alter something then you've...you've got to accept that there are things that...When he was very ill uhh...and he was very ill umm...motor neuron disease is a horrific disease I think, it's even worse than multiple sclerosis. It's much more sort of an...sort of...there is no future and, and...it's a horrendous thing and it was...it was ironic and very very sad in a way that he should be reduced to the same state, or worse, than most of the people he'd done so much to help all his life and he, it would have seemed much kinder had he sort of fallen under a bus or had a heart attack or something, but to go through this that he spent his whole life trying to help seemed to me to be terribly sad and ironic. But of course he didn't feel that, he felt that he was...it was a privilege that he was able to...really to understand what they were having to go through and he felt it was a privilege that he'd been selected in this way and that I don't think that...I mean that's almost saintly isn't it?

37:12 **Jill Roberts**: It is, yes, yes.

37:15 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: I met a woman the other day who...emm...funnily enough he used to spent a lot of his weekends down at Laundry Cottage which used to belong to his father at Le Court, and I met a woman at, only on Friday of last week actually, who is Roman Catholic, and she said that almost every week, well every week when he was down there which was quite a lot apparently, I didn't know that but apparently he went down there a tremendous number of weekends and he always went to this church and she always sat as near as she could to him because she felt he was so saintly that some of it might rub off onto her and she said he was totally wrapped up, alone with his God in the service and it was almost as if there was an aura around him, uhh...a...dedication and uhh...

37:57  **Jill Roberts**: Do you think had he...if he had not had his faith would he have still done the work he did? [Narrator pauses then says something very quietly, which is unclear38:05 ]

38:09 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Well, something very much changed him didn't it? Because he had been such a playboy and everything but...the way he was after. I would, I would say no and I think one of the things that really had a tremendous bearing on it was his going to the dropping of the atom bomb. I think that experience so...so shook him that he decided then that he wanted to spend the rest of his life on trying to alleviate human suffering instead of causing it.

38:34 **Jill Roberts**:  Just one last thought, it's almost exactly three years, not quite, since his death. Do you think the foundation in the last three years has taken the road that he would have liked it to have done? And do you think it has suffered from his death? Apart from the obvious loss of [Unclear38:51 ]

38:53 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Suffered from his death, very much of course. As you say the [Unclear38:56 ] . I think his...his...his ideas, and his leadership...is an immeasurable loss and I think this is one of the big problems that's been facing the Foundation ever since he died, is, how to maintain that spirit without his leadership. It's not very easy and it's going to become more and more difficult as time goes by...and his name slips out of the sort of public knowledge more and more. And that's why I think we've got to concentrate on, on keeping this spirit alive and we mustn't lose sight of it, we must not become too commercialised or..or too intent on running an efficient organisation that we lose sight of his ideals and wonderful, God-given inspiration. Emm...it's difficult to say whether he would have been pleased uhh...I think over all he probably would, the organisation of the headquarters has been altered as you know, because they have now divided up...decent right a lot of the work that was done at [Unclear 39:59 ] ...street as the work's become more and more ehh...bigger and bigger and more varied and dissipated into the different sections of care at home and respite care and day care, all these things umm...there was so much that it couldn't possibly be dealt with in [Unclear40:18  ] , by that organisation, I think it would either have had to moved out somewhere altogether and had an enormous increase in staff and accommodation to cover the thing nationwide or do what it was decided to do, and I still think this was the right decision, to divide the country up into three areas: North, South and West, umm...to...umm to supervise most of their own counties. And I think this is working well now, it had some, probably, teasing umm teething troubles to start with because some of the homes felt that they were only trying to impose another layer of bureaucracy on them, because they didn't realise the difficulties. But I think it is, it is working well now and of course we are in an increasingly competitive world and umm...in the field of disablement as well as everything else so a lot of, pilot nursing homes and pilot firms and things trying to do the same sort of job, in a career to exist at all...got to be competitive, we've got to be efficient and well run and because of this we need more and more professionals nowadays than we did in the early days and this is inevitable I'm afraid.

41:26 **Jill Roberts**: And yet keeping the balance...the idealism...

41:29 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: Of course, of course, but I do think that he would have been pleased with all the different developments, these new forward looking ways in which we are going forward into the unknown to try and satisfy, as well as the existing need which I think will always exist, other needs as and when they come up and uhh...care in the community is very much one of them and respite care and care now, we have a system [Unclear 41:53 ]...whose rather the forerunner in this where they will not only umm...go to look after people living in the community on a sort of daily basis, or out of hours basis or whatever, but now they will move in and live with a disabled person to enable a carer to go on holiday which they haven't had for many years and this is far-sighted in it would be entirely in accordance with the way that Leonard would like to have looked at it, I'd be sure.

42:26 **Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick**: As...there is just one thing I'd like to finish off with if I may. In the very early days of my working with Leonard, I worked with him very closely for over thirty years umm...I read a piece of poetry that had been written by a prisoner of war in a Japanese prison camp just before he died. And his sufferings must have been immeasurable, but he had written:

'I sought my soul but my soul I could not see; I sought my God but my God eluded me; but I sought my brother and I found all three'

And I thought that was a wonderful piece of poetry for somebody in those circumstances to write and I was very impressed with this and I made sure that we had it up in the, in each of the homes which I started, both in this country and overseas, as far as I was concerned it was very true.

43:23 **Jill Roberts**: Pamela Farrell-Tredinnick, thank you very much.

43:27 - 48:41 : Silence

**End of Transcription**