**Audio Transcription**

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

**Film Title:** St Cecilia’s Family Day 1958

**Duration:** 69:30

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**Summary of Main Points**

**00:17 –**Bob Opens proceedings with two apologies and a resolution

**07:58 –**Leonard Cheshire explains the relay is being recorded and how he met Bob

**08:56 –**Leonard Cheshire explains how Bob had located a house to be used as a home

**09:31 –**Leonard Cheshire St Cecilia's purchased and today has a new extension

**14:21 –**Leonard Cheshire explains the two-fold objective of the organisation

**20:26 –**New homes opening in England and abroad

**24:26 –**Expanding into Poland

**41:22 –**Sue Ryder describes the work being done behind the Iron Curtain

**Start of Transcription**

0:07 [Audience Murmuring] to 0:17

0:17 **Bob:** Start the official proceedings with two apologies I'd like to make, one is for Lord Denning, who ... although he very much wanted to be here, he found it literally, absolutely impossible. Err he, I know he regrets very much that he can’t be at family day; our only saving grace at St Cecilia's is the fact that he's coming to officially open the home for us tomorrow. The other apology is that, much as we would like to have had patients from the other homes, as you'll see we are a bit cramped for space, and therefore we had to err say we're very sorry we shan't have you. That doesn't mean that ... they’re  excluded from family day and I'd like to  make it quite clear that in point of fact they *are*part of the family, I'm right there Leonard? [Turns away from the microphone to ask the question] In fact the most important part of the family, and so what we've done to bring them in, is to have what ...I'm saying and err what the rest of the, the speakers are going to talk to you about today broadcast or relayed into ... St Cecilia's err so that the patients can hear what is being said. Now having said that … err you'll notice on your programs that there's no mention of an official welcome. It’s only a very short day and there's an awful lot that ... we want to talk about and we want to discuss that is of importance and we felt that it was wrong to waste a whole lot of time in a lot of unnecessary, err, opening speeches. So I'm going to only spend two or three minutes talking to you before I ask the G.C to start the ball rolling and in those two or three minutes there are three points I'd like to make. The first is to welcome  you on behalf of all of us at St Cecilia's very sincerely and to thank you, many of you for coming long distances in order  to play your part in making  this a successful family day. In the past we, at St Cecilia's, some of us, have been down to other family days particularly, St Teresa's and Staunton Harold. And ... we found, when we came back, not only had we made many new friends and renewed old acquaintances. Not only had we learnt an awful lot which we've been able to ... implement by putting into our own home here ... but we came away, particularly with a tremendous boost to our pride in this wonderful family ... and in our leader the G.C. I hope that today, you'll make new friends you'll renew old acquaintances and, doubtful perhaps, but perhaps you will learn something from what you see at St Cecilia’s. But I think the most important thing is and I hope that we will entertain you in such a way as to make you go away, renewed in the pride of this wonderful organisation and, and our founder. The second point is this, that we don't flatter ourselves that you come here primarily to see us. I think that if that was the case the whole object of family day would be missed. I'm sure that every one of you here has come ... today because it’s the one time in the year the one day in each year when we can really demonstrate our loyalty and our affection for the G.C and ... as an expression of our gratitude for what he is doing for others. I think too, that, although some people might think it’s a great trouble to come long distances err, or to have to prepare meals for a fairly large gathering, that sort of thing. I think too that some people might imagine that it was an awful ...  trouble and one had to put oneself out an awful lot to do it. Well, I don't know whether that is the case or not, but if it is, a jolly good thing because in point of fact it demonstrates all the more, how much we *are* grateful to Leonard for, not only what he's doing for the sick but what he's doing for us in helping us to look after them and to live better lives. Now, the third thing, and I hope I'm not going to be flung out, when I mention this [Takes a breath] errm but, it seems to me that every home must strive to attain perfection, I think it’s right, because only by doing that can we get the best for our own patients. At the same time I think it would be a pity if ... this was done at the cost of ... the ... err group, the movement as a whole. Every time any of us go to the central foundation whether it the English one or the Indian one or any other one, every time we go to them, we are asking them to ... give us some of the strength that they so urgently need to progress with this work. Every time they give us ... any of this strength we are sapping them and we are delaying them in the growth of the work and the helping of more people. If nothing else comes from this day at St Cecilia’s this family day, I would like to feel that it was remembered as the family day on which every member of every committee of every home, resolved that for a year ... they would do everything in their power, not to call for help from the central trust. I know it’s not always possible but if you resolve it, to do so, then there are times when you say 'Oh, well, we'll get over it ourselves this time'. And the other thing is, that errm, just before I am chucked out [laughter from audience], in case nobody is doing that, then to go on and make another resolution to write to the trust and to tell them that you are willing, each one of you, to help in every way you can, in furthering the extension of new homes and looking after sick people. In that way I think we are doing our job properly. We're not only, looking after our own little band of residents, patients in our own homes but at the same time we are in fact giving ourselves and encouraging and helping those who can expand the work - 'cause we can’t - do so. Well now, I'll leave that thought with you, if you feel, any of you, that errm you would like to take those resolutions, no need to write to Miss Mason [turns away from microphone] about it  just do them and act on them yourselves, I'm sure she'll soon know! Well now that's all I've got to say errm G.C may I now ask you to open the proceedings [turns away from microphone to invite G.C to take over]  before I do so, again, I extend a hearty welcome to you all and I hoped that you find that it hasn't been a waste of time coming. I know that we want to hear from the G.C as to what's happened in the last year and as to what plans there are for the future. I believe that the plans are as exciting as they've ever been either ... by ...faced by the trust in England or which the trust in India have had to face, GC.

7:52 [Applause] to 7:58

7:58 **Leonard Cheshire:** Ladies and gentlemen ... err Bob told you that there's errm a relay on the end of this microphone, I don't think he's told you that there's a tape recorder on the end of it too [Audience laugh] And its most appropriate because I first met Bob and Peggy over a tape recorder, didn't I?

8:17 **Bob:** [in the background] I switched it on, alright. [Audience laugh]

8:20 **Leonard Cheshire:** I first met Bob when I was lying in hospital at the mercy of the nurses and doctors ... and not allowed out of my room and I got a letter out of the blue from a little boy, Richard asking something, I forget what it was, and as a result of it Bob and Peggy came down...and err that started our friendship ... and it started a whole series of errm ... tape recorder work. I used to record peculiar messages from ... the sanatorium and he used to drive round London in a bus [laughs] playing them, didn't you Bob?

8:54 [Laughter] to 8:55

8:56 **Leonard Cheshire:** To any unfortunate passerby who might happen to be coming. And err before long he said he thought he would like to start a home. Well, I don't think we gave him very much encouragement, but err Bob isn't the person who errm gets put off by lack of encouragement. So very soon he came along and said I ha ... he said he has a house and he only wanted 5000 pounds so he could buy it. [Laughter] He wouldn't take no for an answer and eventually he talked the hospital authorities into letting me have a couple of nights off was it Bob? 

9:30 **Bob:** I don't know was it? [Laughter]

9:31 **Leonard Cheshire:** And I came up and I saw this house here, which didn't look as it does now. So he formed a little local committee, I don't know where the money came from but errm, anyway, a deposit was paid a loan was raised from the bank, I think [Laughter from audience] an err the house was brought. So while I continued lying in bed in hospital for another year err St Cecilia's grew and thrived and today as you know it has a 21000 pound extension and err a very big future ahead of it. So St Cecilia's was a turning point, in our short history because as far as I was concerned it was founded by merely having to give in to Bob's repeated ... requests for a home, I merely just had to say 'Alright'. And today is also a turning point in our history, as you will find out later on and therefore it’s most appropriate...in my mind, that we should be here at St Cecilia's on this, our fourth family day. It’s actually a moment that I've been waiting for for a long time, a very long time. Partly because it is family day and although every day I try to come round the different homes in spirit and err try to picture what you’re doing and how things are going ... it’s not quite the same thing and this is the one day in the year when we are all together in one place. And we do have representatives from practically all the homes all over the world, except, I think, unfortunately, Singapore and then we very nearly did have somebody from there.

11:32 **Leonard Cheshire:** In particular we have a very strong contingent from our first Indian home, Bombay. We have Lady Dugan, you know about Lady Dugan because at the last family day we were told the story of how the Bombay home had started from nothing in an open field, under a tree and how the ladies that had their first committee meeting and said "We have 7 patients and no furniture and no nurse and no money and we don't own the property and nobody in Bombay knows us, what are we going to do?" [Audience chuckle] Lady Dugan remembers that moment. And she'll remember that one of the ladies got up and said "My husband would put on a pantomime" and that was widely acclaimed by all the ladies present, at least those that had ever *heard* of a pantomime, some of them hadn't! But Nina Carning had then to go and break the news to her husband [Laughter from the audience] and she decided she would wait for a convenient moment ... but the convenient moment didn't come. And at the next meeting of the management committee, it was suddenly announced with Jimmy Carney, her husband in the chair ... that Jimmy Carney was going to put on a pantomime [Laughter from the audience] and it was the first he'd ever heard of it. But he rose to the occasion, he didn't say anything *then* to his wife and he duly put on this pantomime. He had a homemade script, a homemade stage, he collected actors and actresses from all over Bombay and Lady Dugan, Gina, gave her garden ... and her garden is one of the most beautiful gardens you could imagine, particularly for that purpose! It was all sort of framed with trees and ... cut hedges, just exactly perfect for 650 chairs. So the panto, pantomime went on and it made 3000 pounds. And it went on again last year and it made another 3000 pounds and Jimmy Carney who organised it was missing 'cause he's been posted to Indonesia, but none the less, the pantomime is still going on. And we have Mrs Robinson here who errm knows all about the pantomime, she did all the dresses and I don’t know what else last year, so we must take the occasion, not only of welcoming them but wishing them all the best, next Christmas, when it goes on again.

14:15 [Applause] to 14:21

14:21 **Leonard Cheshire:** I can’t go all the way round the homes, much as I would like to and tell you the story of each one of them, how each one has had its own little way of doing exactly the same thing and it's overcome its own difficulties in its own particular way. But the story of Bombay stands as a symbol of them all. An' looking round the room now and seeing you *all*conjures up memories of  ... the struggles that you've had and some are still having to build up a home from nothing. But in building it up we do of course want to keep our mind on our objective and not lose sight of that ... and our objective really is two-fold. The first objective ... is, wherever we get a request for help and we can see that it’s a genuine request for help ... and that there's nowhere else that he can go ... reasonably go, not to turn him away. And that was the principle on which the homes were founded. It has its difficulties because once a home is full and running and so on one can’t, crowd it ou ... up to the hatches. If one did the people living in it wouldn't be very comfortable. But never the less there stands at the door, somebody, who has turned to us for help and hasn't anyone else to turn to and therefore we must help him. In the same way that a mother, if her child is in need, will never consider her shortage of money or her own state of health or anything else. She'll only consider the needs of her child, and that is what we, between us, as best we can, must do. And today, as you will know shortly has a particular significance in that direction. Because over the past few years it’s been difficult, to take every deserving case, in fact we haven't! I think that still today in spite of the 15 homes and the 4 others that are being built, we turn away very nearly, one application a day, through shortage of space. In England of course they do have somewhere else to go, it may not 'praps be quite what they want but at least they do have shelter and care and nursing. But outside the shores of ... England, that's not so. And there are countless 1000's of people who literally have nowhere. In Dehradun where we're trying to build up a large home to be a model for the Far East, the other day two people were walking along the road a 100 yards away from the home. And they found a boy in a hedge and he was starving, he was so weak that he couldn't move and he was Deaf and dumb and blind and covered with sores. And they picked him up and they carried him into the home and there he now lives, his sores are gone, he's ... big and strong, in fact a bit too big and strong 'cause he won’t do as much work as 'praps he might do. [Audience chuckle] But he's been given a home and he has a family, but had the home not been there I don't know what would have happened. There's another little girl there of 7 and a half who has TB glands and also polio. And she was found abandoned outside the hospital and the hospital took her in and gave her some treatment for her TB, then said they couldn't keep her, she must go! And if there wasn't a home for her to go she'll be put out somewhere on somebody's doorstep to be looked after. An' later this morning you'll hear stories of other people in different circumstances, quite close to us whose need is similar. An' so between us, as best we can, we want to try and set out and help them *all*! But of course it's not enough merely to take somebody under ones roof and give them shelter ... what we've got to try and do, is to give them the opportunity of living their life. Now we all know that, we each have our own ... individuality, our own personality which we want to express! We have our own way of *doing* little things ... and it's very frustrating if we can’t do it in quite the way we want. But when one’s disabled, one’s dependent upon other people ... and therefore one can’t do it in the way one likes, it’s very frustrating. But more than that, that feeling of being dependent on somebody, is in itself, upsetting, 'cause we like to feel a measure of independence. And so the whole idea of our homes is that those who come to live in it, will be given the opportunity, so far as they can, of leading their *own* lives. They have a full life ahead of them and they want to live it, as we want to live it. And so today, later on we're going to discuss that particular problem, we can exchange our ideas and gain inspiration from each other as to how best to go about it.

20:26 **Leonard Cheshire:** Well since the early days, when we took those first patients in ... the work has expanded a lot. In those days in the first Le Court we had every type of patient. Infectious, non-infectious, mentally backward and not mentally backward, ex-prisoners, all sorts. Course the days come when they can’t all live under the same roof but as the homes are expanding we're providing homes for each of the different categories. Since our last family day ... two particular things have happened. We have started in England, two homes for the ... mentally incapacitated, those who ...  are not in need of active treatment, but are not well enough to stand on their own feet in the world. And also for poor little children, who are mentally backward and can’t look after themselves. And it looks as if there's a big a scope in this field, for the mentally backward as there is in the work we've been already doing! And so we do wish Wimbledon and Dorchester, the best of luck in this big new venture. Both of which homes I'm sure will be a pilot scheme ... for many others throughout the country. The other expansion has been overseas. We know that we're fairly well established in India, we're well established in Singapore, thanks largely to the volunteers from the RAF who've built a beautiful home from a few crumbled walls ... all free of cost except the price of the material. Miss Mason has been to Lebanon and she's spent err ... 10 happy days with Barry Richards I think, the time of the err revolution [Audience chuckle] And they found several properties, pictures of which are up here. One of which has been given and there's a little local committee, the chairman of the local committee has been over to England, visited Le Court, been very impressed and gone back full of fire and energy and determination to start up! Wilfred Russell has been to Nigeria, in the course of his business and he stirred things up there ... err, we had a doctor come in yesterday from Nigeria err anxious to start. They not only want to start one home, they want to start two simultaneously in different parts of Nigeria. And Wilfred goes back there next week for another visit and it looks as if, before long ... err ... there will be something starting there! As a result of  ... Margot's visit to Lebanon, St Cecilia's, the other day had a visit from Doctor Secaria and Doctor Secaria comes from Syria and he's in the process of building a large hospital, privately from his own money for 120 beds! So he's come here, seen St Cecilia's, and I think I may say, very impressed, so much so that he now wants, us to start a home in conjunction with him in Syria. So perhaps all this will be the beginning of a big expansion throughout the Middle East. Particularly is the Irish society of Kuwait ... they've been raising money for us and sending in 200 pounds a year and wish to do a lot more for the Middle East homes.

24:26 **Leonard Cheshire:** That brings me the the biggest expansion of all - into Poland. Err you know something about it, but what has happened is this; 18 months ago, somebody, am I allowed to give her name?

24:43 **Bob:** Yes boss

24:44 **Leonard Cheshire:** What?

24:44 **Bob:** Yes [Laughs]

24:48 **Leonard Cheshire:** Mrs Stevenson, whose husband is warden of Le Court came up and said "You must start a home in Poland". Well that's not he sort of thing one can say 'Yes, certainly I will' [Audience laugh] anyway we err we said we would do what we could and we began investigating as opportunity occurred. Wilfred went to America and he got the support of some of the Polish people in America. Then when things began to develop a bit, we thought well if it comes to the actual start who can do it? And after a lot of thought we decided there was only one person, in the country who could do it and that was Sue Ryder. Sue, we'd known Sue for about two years then, the err displaced persons in Germany that she helps and about which, you’re going to hear a lot more. She used to bring them over to Staunton Harold and other homes for holidays, and so eventually we asked her, if she ever had an opportunity of going to Poland whether she would see what could be done. So in May of this year she took her little car, Alice, is that right? [Turns slightly away from the microphone to ask the question]

26:09 [Unclear murmuring and laughter in the background] to 26:11

26:12 **Leonard Cheshire:** And she drove in through Denmark over a ship, I mean she couldn't go in through Eastern Germany. I don't think she had any introductions there and err nobody prepared the way for her and she disappeared for 2 and a half weeks and at the end of that time she emerged in Czechoslovakia, where, I think Alice broke down, what ... are you going to tell them this?

26:33 **Sue Ryder:** Well 26:33 [Unclear and laughter] to 26:36

26:36 **Leonard Cheshire:** Alice broke down and she was standing beside it wondering what to do when along came a contingent of the Russian army. So she stopped the contingent and she told them that Alice had broken down [Audience giggle] and the contingent stopped their march long enough to get Alice going again [Audience laugh] so here here we have Sue back. [G.C and audience laugh] Well during that time, she'd managed to engineer an, an errm a meeting with the Ministry of Health and put the problem to them. And so far as one could see the Ministry of Health agreed that it would be a very good idea ... that there was a great need for this in Poland and that they would welcome any help that was given. And so on September the 2nd she and I went together, to see how things had got on. We had this meeting on September the 3rd at the Ministry and I think I may say that after a couple of minutes Sue took charge of the meeting and errm conducted all the operations err with the result that the deputy Minister of Health who was there ... couldn't have been more friendly, couldn't have been more helpful. He said "We are in great need in Poland; we have great shortage of beds ... 'cause after all, frankly all the hospitals were destroyed in the war and we desperately need help". And so an agreement was signed with the Ministry, the following day, whereby we were to found two homes in Poland on land given by the Ministry and with help provided by the Ministry for the incurably sick. The first for those suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis and the others, I think to be decided later. The home was to be managed by a committee, appointed by the Ministry of Health with two representatives appointed by us. Well the question then was, under what direction this should be run? And so after a number of discussions between Sue and our trustees ... and myself ... we mutually decided the thing to do, was to form an amalgamation, between herself and all her work and her, many 100's, 1000's of supporters and us! And that we would found a new foundation bearing her name and ours, with a specific task of working behind, the Iron Curtain, in so far as we could, and of helping those people, who don't come under the category of the homes. People who've been out of prison and so on, people whom we all want to help but don't actually belong to the homes themselves. So, that really is the biggest development of this year. But when you have heard Sue speak about her work, I know she won’t talk about herself, but anybody who knows Sue, can’t help being caught by the infection ... of the way she goes about her work. I don't suppose she's ever turned anybody down, in the 12 years since the war, who’s come to her f, for help. I don't suppose there's anybody else who manages to pack quite as much into a day as she does ... and I've just been to Germany for 6 days to see her work, and on the 4th day having had, by anybody’s standards what you might call a busy time. During one of which nights she errm, while I went to bed ... spent the whole night driving down to Hannover to pick somebody up, who actually wasn't there! [Audience Laugh] On the 4th evening of this ... tour ... we're suddenly told that errm we've got an appointment at 10:30 in the morning in Munich ... well Munich from Hannover was 520 miles! So we get into the car, which isn't Alice, but it’s Elijah this time it’s the bigger one ... and off we set! And we cover these 520 miles during the night and we get there at 10:30 and err we do the days work. Well in order to get here today, Sue has had to drive from Munich, through two days and one night. She landed yesterday afternoon, with errm 3 paralyzed patients whom she’s giving a holiday to. Drove down to Suffolk, installed them for the night, cooked them their supper and drove up this morning to be here and she'll return the same journey this evening. [Laughs] So, in joining with Sue, we have gained a new inspiration and a new drive. And today is a day on which we, so to speak formally, announce our amalgamation and which I publicly, and in the name of all our helpers and patients, all over the world, thank Sue, for having joined forces with us and I look forward, very much indeed to a whole new sphere of activity!

32:33 **Leonard Cheshire:** Well now, to come down to practical points, this home that’s being started in Poland is very urgent because winter's coming and they have nowhere at all to live. So we have ordered 2 prefabricated huts, very beautiful ones, from Wolverhampton. The firm is 100% behind the project, they’re going to get them manufactured and complete by November 1st, delivered on site immediately, they’re sending their best engineer to supervise the ... the.. erection of it. They’re determined that it’ll be not only a credit to the foundation but also to British workmanship. We've got to equip that with beds, sheets, wheelchairs, everything under the sun, because they have nothing ... in Poland. And so I wonder whether you can look round your attics, look round your ... your ... friends and see if there's anything in the way of equipment that you could give Sue by the middle of November. And in doing that ... I wonder whether, in various ways, you can help all this overseas expansion. St Teresa's is helping by starting up an organisation, you know of, called HAM, it's the err amateurs wireless operators league, whereby they keep in touch on wireless all over the world. And their idea is to try and link all the homes together through this means, we can talk to each other and pass messages. And maybe in every home, each home in turn can find *some* way, of helping the poor people outside the shores of England who are in such need. And what we learnt from going to Poland was this, that when it comes to the relief of human suffering, to helping those who are helpless ... there is a fundamental, complete solidarity between us *all, w*hich transcends the differences of nationality and politics. The Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs in Poland sent forth, on the last day of the visit and said that he wished to thank us formally in the name of the politicians ... and he said that he was thankful at last to be able to discuss something which was not controversial! We have received an offer of help from the Russian Minister of Health, in money and kind for the Indian homes. And that offer of help has a full approval of the Foreign Office here in London. So that whatever we can do in our small way, to help the cause of the sick and the dying and the homeless throughout the world will, I’m sure, do something towards understanding amongst nations. So today, our family day, when we come together as members of one family, scattered about the world ... perhaps we can make that good resolution! So I've come to the end of my few words, Bob is going to introduce Sue Ryder ... just remains for me to wish her and you a happy day together and to thank St Cecilia's and Bob and all those with him, with all my heart, for such a warm welcome and so many arrangements to make us comfortable and to congratulate him on that beautiful 21,000 pound wing, *all* of the money for which, St Cecilia's has raised or found entirely by themselves without any help from the Trust.

 36:38 [Applause] to 36:47

36:47 **Bob:** Err ladies and gentlemen I got a note at the top of my pad, nonsense! Err, that means that the first part of Leonard's talk referring to St Cecilia's is of course, as you all know, nonsense! This home, like every other Cheshire home would never be in existence without him and, I, I'm sure I'm right in saying that. Errm the other  ... thing is that errm, oddly enough, what he has said today I had no idea he was going to say ... and I do feel that having heard of the plans for the future that we can’t, but, make that resolution that I suggested to you at the beginning of today's affairs. I think that there are *so* many people as Leonard has said, outside Europe, or outside England who need help, that we really must try and do more than our little bit in our homes. Well now about 4 month ago, somebody, not to do with the Cheshire organisation at all, almost forced me into reading a book! I'd been fairly busy, so have we all on the committee at St Cecilia's, and we haven't had much time to read. But ... it was ... I was so impressed by the way this ... friend of mine said that I must read the book, that I brought it. It’s a book called 'But Some There Be" ... I didn't know what it was about but as I started to read it, I found that my blood pressure mounted and mounted, until towards the end of the book I really had to put it down and put it to one side. The book is about err displaced persons and I regret to say that, I, like I think a lot of people don't realise the dreadful state that exists among these people in Europe. People who 10, 12 years ago were our allies, they were fighting, not only for their own lives but for our lives, and yet ... 1000's of these people are  ... just put away in the gutter, completely homeless and left just to rot! I say completely ... there are a few people who are helping and one of the people who are doing a wonderful work among these DP's is Sue Ryder. Now when I read the book, I had actually heard of her because I'd met her for about 2 minutes up at Staunton Harold about 4 years ago. And I remember at the time asking Leonard whom the girl was in one of the offices at Staunton, which had just been started, who spent her time bashing away at a typewriter from 7 O’clock in the morning till 10 O’clock at night and I'm, I'm not exaggerating. *All* day long the whole of that weekend, she was banging at this typewriter and I was told that she was having a holiday from her visits to Germany. Well, it didn't register anything then, I completely forgot about it until I read this book. Well, Sue is going to tell you of some of the work she's doing, I know she won’t err tell of her real part in it. We have arranged for some of the books ... th, that was written, this book that I mentioned just now, it is really the story of Sue and her work among the DP's, we've arranged to have them down here. When you've heard her story, I would suggest, and I'm not trying to sell them, that you, if you can get one of these books and read it. I think, that it will give us, encouragement in what we are doing in our particular Cheshire home, I think it will broaden our outlook and remind us that there is an awful lot more to be done, other than just in our little home and I think it will help you to make that resolution and to really go out to help the foundation and to try and make certain that these plans are a success quickly! Because the quicker they are a success the quicker these people, who so desperately need help, can be helped. I'll say no more except to ask Sue, after thanking her *very* much, for coming such a long distance, over night and over day, I'm sorry that we've put her to this inconvenience, but to thank her *very* much for coming and Sue, now, if we might hear from you.

41:15 [Applause] to 41:22

41:22 **Sue Ryder:** Ladies and gentlemen, it's a very great privilege err for me to have been asked here, today ... and a great pleasure and to be able to come. I have heard, not only about this home, but indeed  ... of all the other homes that are scattered about in England and, now in different parts of the world. I've also ... had the honour of visiting 1 or 2 of the others. The time has crept on, very remarkably, which ... err leads me to say that I don't want to keep you here any longer ... than I'm sure you want to be and to try and  ...err ... put into a few moments, tell you in these few moments something about the work that has been going on since the end of the war ... in Europe. Now everybody surely, here, has heard about refugees ... it's a title which we're ... we dislike and we're rather tired of. We are apt I think ... err ... in the main to summarize them by thinking that they are just homeless people scattered about the world err who large organisations help. We may not, pause sufficiently, to think back from where they came from, who they are and why they’re still there. And it has been my great privilege, both during and after the war err to have worked with and amongst them. Not just ... with refugees ... but with people who mean much more than that to us ... because they are, our forgotten allies. People who've just been ... heard, referred to as those that risked everything in the allied corps during the last war ... and who have since been abandoned by the rest of the world. Today, it gives me the opportunity of mentioning them and bringing them, so to speak ... into the circle ... and into the family, which indeed, they belong to, just as much as any other person in any other country does.

44:13 [Long Pause] to 44:18

44:18 **Sue Ryder:** They are these forgotten allies, mostly those who were, prisoners of war and shared all the privations and discomforts, with our own people between 1939 and 45 and the survivors of the German concentration camps.

44:35 [Long Pause] to 44:39

44:39 **Sue Ryder:** That brings me to a point here, which I'm often asked about. Is it necessary to be told again of what went on in Buchenwald and Ravensbruck and Auschwitz and Dachau to mention only a few of the main concentration camps. The Gerry people have realised the horror that's been inflicted during the war years and they want to forget it, and the last thing on earth is they want to be reminded about it. Now I think there's a, a very strong answer to that.

45:16 [Long Pause] to 45:20 

45:20 **Sue Ryder:** Firstly ... very few people realise to the full, of the amount of suffering that went on in those camps. Indeed what went on before they even entered into them ... when they were captured and tortured and spent months and years in Gestapo prisons. And do we realise the extent ... that the extermination was planned and carried out. That for instance, in Auschwitz alone, which I visited and had many many friends there ... between 4 and 5 million people were killed. Ordinary men and women and children ...  of all ages and professions and from all parts of Europe and indeed, the world. That for years on end 25,000 people were literally exterminated each 24 hours ... and that is just one camp.

46:30 [Long Pause] to 46:34

46:34 **Sue Ryder**: I think in respect those that died in those places and suffered in silence, because at that time people, certainly in England didn't realise what was happening ... we owe them such respect and sympathy, that it is the very least we can do now, to see that those who survived, those places of torture ... and Hell on Earth are at least looked after and helped in the best possible way. There are very few survivors, now, so many have died since 1945 but it is up to us, I feel, wherever they may be, err to go on trying to help in whatever way we can, because nearly all of them are in great need, still.

47:28 [Long Pause] to 47:35 

47:35 **Sue Ryder:** You've heard, I'm sure o, of the big organisations that took care of these millions of people after the liberation in 1945.

47:45 [Long Pause] to 47:49

47:49 **Sue Ryder:** There were, relief teams, the Red Cross and the Quakers ... UNRRA later IRO, to mention but a very few ... of scores of people ... and committees and societies that rushed out to Europe, to try and help.

48:11 [Long Pause] to 48:15 

48:15 **Sue Ryder:** Each of us working out there then, as field workers were told that we had to follow certain policies. I was fortunately with an organisation that paid no attention to creed or colour or religion ...

48:35 No sound to 49:15

49:15 **Sue Ryder:** ...rather cramped by certain rules. But we did see err the terrible faults that took place all the time and the mistakes that had been made ... as to what to do with them.

49:29 [Long Pause] to 49:33 

49:33 **Sue Ryder:** Everybody said at first, in ignorance that they should be repatriated. What they didn't realise was that the majority of them had already suffered at some time, particularly the Russians under the Soviet regime, and were very much against going back ... and facing another form of terror. They'd lived through it, they'd then experienced the Nazi terror and they were against going back and suffering all over again. But there was forced repatriation which was later acknowledged to be a great mistake.

50:11 [Long Pause] to 50:15 

50:15 **Sue Ryder:** There were waves of suicides ... people changed their names and nationalities in order to dodge this forced repatriation ... and there was little, that we could do, except to give comfort and help wherever possible during those first days. It also equally appalled me ... and I'm speaking now in the first few weeks and months after the liberation ... of the comparative ... ignorance and the casual, callous attitude ... that so many others had ... partly, I think, because they didn't witness the scenes.

50:56 [Long Pause] to 51:00

51:00 **Sue Ryder:** Towards the 1000's that were dying anonymously in the woods and along he roadsides ... in fact in every imaginable place. One didn't have to enter a concentration camp to see what had happened in Europe during the war. And they died in their scores, only to remain anonymous ... to be abandoned and passed by ... without anybody pausing to think, who they were, that they were just human beings who had every right to live, just as much as anybody else had.

51:45 [Long Pause] to 51:49

51:49 **Sue Ryder:** There were some of us ... who were trying to help ... though, it was, indeed very inadequate because, as you can imagine with 1000's and 1000's of these people milling about, lying all over the ground, in advanced stages of illness and disease ... that only the most elementary help could be given ... and if possible, then they were brought into hospitals, if they were still alive. It struck us then that this should never never reoccur. That each of us as individuals should *try* and see ... that it was the last time ... that the world should face such appalling suffering. Unfortunately we haven't advanced very far since then. But *perhaps ...*there are people who are more conscious of what happened ... and who now, at least would register dismay and try and stop it or at least go out and help relieve it ... if such a situation occurred once more.

53:15 [Long Pause] to 53:22

53:22 **Sue Ryder:** Well, for the next 7 years ... the forced repatriation stopped ... and the problem, as it was referred to, was discussed ... at Geneva, Washington ... and so on. Nobody knew what to do with them! They were the unwanted people of the world ... and then commissions came ... to interview them, select them and decide whether they could go to their countries. When we heard about the commissions arriving, we thought, rather naively 'Well this is going to be the answer, everybody, of course will be taken!' ... the old, the disabled, the blind and the sick. And you may imagine the horror and dismay ... when ... it, it'd  became almost immediately apparent the commissions and the consuls were only interested in those, who they considered ... were suitable for hard manual work and who they wished to consider were 100% fit! All sorts of difficulties were thrown up. There were pre-war immigration laws were exercised which were *completely*out of date and tune with the circumstances. The people were told, who came from some remote part of Russia or Poland or Yugoslavia that they had to produce their birth certificates and they had to fill in forms of 69 questions giving information about their great great grandmother, whether they'd ever been mental, before they were even *allowed* to con, to be considered as an immigrant. And the people who had been arrested in the churches and the markets, on the streets ... or literally ...as active members of the underground, could hardly produce *any*of the things that the commissions demanded of them. And so, resettlement in any form to any country, became extremely difficult. Nevertheless as the years progressed over 1,000,000 of them were resettled to different countries overseas. And then in 1951, 52 we were told we'd reached the bottom of the barrel. That the rest of them were to be referred to as the hard corps and left! They were to be handed back to the German authorities who would take control over them ... that their national schools and kindergarten's would be closed, and that they would remain as forgotten people in Europe, and certainly unwanted. The large organisations withdrew ... they rushed off to Korea ... and other countries.

56:25[Long Pause] to 56:32 

56:32 **Sue Ryder:**It seemed to me, then, to be utterly wrong ... firstly that they were not all taken out of Germany, which was the country responsible for their suffering and secondly that we should just leave them there. Leave them to their fate, because people of over 45 with a profession had no chance of getting a job. That the majority of them were sick, mainly with TB ...and that those that had suffered in the concentration camps were refused compensation by the German government ... despite the laws that had been passed to the contrary, that they should receive 15 pounds for every month that they spent in a concentration camp. I merely mention that fact ... because it shows all the more that the help we give them is so necessary ... and that they are still unfortunately, partly dependent on our help and other charity.

57:39 [Long Pause] to 57:47

57:47 **Sue Ryder:** Well since 1952 they've been left there and they are still in these camps and hospitals ... their own hospitals were closed down ... and the patients are scattered throughout ... the length and breadth of Western Germany. They are very lonely, they often don't speak the language and are not understood and there's discrimination shown against them by the German doctors and nurses. There are various projects ... which I have tried to start, which, perhaps gives *some* form of relief ... and their whole standard of living has improved, partly because of immigration and because so many of them have *died* and it therefore makes more space in the camps for the others. There's not the same overcrowding that there was, for instance a few years ago when there would be 5 or 6 families in an ordinary sized room without any privacy at all.

58:51 [Long Pause] to 58:59

58:59 **Sue Ryder:** Well those are the people, who we refer to as the forgotten allies. They are, nearly all of them *sick ...* and because of their sickness and because of what they suffered in the allied corps they are there today.

59:17 [Long Pause] to 59:23

59:23 **Sue Ryder:** As one of them referred to it err they still are waiting, sitting in the waiting room wondering what is going to happen to them next. And as another one said "You may imagine what emptiness there is in the spirit, when one sees nothing ahead."

59:40 [Long Pause] to 59:44  

59:44 **Sue Ryder:** And you've heard already ... err from Leonard this morning, of what we're trying, t to, go and do for those, particularly the survivors of Auschwitz  and the other concentration camps on the other side of the Iron Curtain, those that happened to be liberated there ... and who are in great need of every form of assistance. I don't want to go into any further details as to what we hope to do and the expansion that we hope to make for them, not only in Poland but perhaps, eventually ... in the other countries too. It’s very difficult for us, I think, to realise ... just what the conditions are like there. When I went this year, for the first time it reminded me, very much of Western Europe in 1944 and 45, the needs are so great, and if a person even as healthy, he can only earn enough to buy himself  pair of shoes for a month, that's his whole, total wage goes in buying one pair of shoes. So you may imagine that for those that are sick and can’t work ... what the needs are.

61:03 [Long Pause] to 61:10

61:10 **Sue Ryder:** I am sometimes asked ... surely the problems of helping ... these forgotten allies ... and indeed others behind the Iron Curtain should be left to the governments of the world. These problems should be decided by the United Nations ... that it’s *not* err, for individuals or groups in this country ... to get up and talk about them ... o, or even to raise support. I'm told that it’s quite wrong, that, that those, that sort of thing had past ... and that it must really be left to the governments. Because one thing, their help will be much more effective, that it'll be on the right footing and so on. You know, in England err that, the welfare state does not answer *all*the needs ... I can only say, as a very humble field worker, that one has seen over the 14 years ... vast organisations, backed by err, err, the ... income of over 30 nations ... and one comes always back to the same conclusion. That it is the people who as individuals ... started to do this work or a similar work on a personal basis that the real good was achieved. There are several people ... who over this past century stand ... as really shining examples, in ones mind. And one of them was [Arden Anson -Unclear 63:24 to 63:25] after the 1st Word War, who did so much for the relief of suffering in Russia and the famine. And the second person is Count Folke Bernadotte of the Swedish Red Cross who I had the great privilege ... of meeting. Now he was ridiculed and talked about and people said he was mad! But he still went out and accomplished his mission, which unfortunately met such a tragic end when he was assassinated in 1948.

64:00 [Long Pause] to 64:06

64:06 **Sue Ryder:**  When he worked he did things, things himself! And he actually negotiated with Himmler ... during the war ... and took his ambulances in ... to the concentration camps when nobody else was even allowed to enter. And it was through his initiative ... and personal enthusiasm ... that he, rescued, no less than 42,000 people of different nationalities from those concentration camps. He drove the ambulances ... and he went into those huts ... where people were dying, every moment of different illness and disease and he lifted them out and brought them away to Sweden.

65:04 [Long Pause] to 65:08

65:08 **Sue Ryder:** Err the majority of them *died* but they left the concentration camps with the knowledge ... that this man had been sent to them ... to rescue them from those hells and to restore their faith ... I, in human beings. It was very moving, meeting many of them ... who had been rescued by Count Bernadotte.  

65:38 [Long Pause] to 65:42

65:42 **Sue Ryder:** And were certain that he was, somebody rather chosen... to cope ... with work of that kind at the end of the war. And that I think, always makes one believe, through err seeing and being with him ... of his tremendous work and the plans that he had for relief work in *all* countries ... all over the world. That one is so convinced ... that where there is human suffering ... and need, nothing should stop ... us from going in and doing it. That no matter what people think of ... or have political beliefs in ... those things should not stand as barriers, that there should be no frontiers.  

66:44 [Long Pause] to 66:48   

66:48 **Sue Ryder:**And we have those examples and we should, as a result of them b, be able to go forward ...we've greater opportunities now, than even he had then ... and perhaps more understanding. And with faith and this belief that everything is possible, where human beings are in distress, I'm quite convinced ... that any mission would succeed. And finally, we'll rememb, we remember that no man is an island entire of itself ...any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.

67:45 [Applause] to 67:57   

67:57 **Leonard Cheshire:** Well, ladies and gentlemen it would be quite out of place for me to, err add anything to what Sue has said or, almost err even to thank her ... particularly as she is a member of our family and we a member of hers. So I'll just announce that we've finished our meeting this morning ... and that err I think St Cecilia's have some refreshment and so on for us and we all go outside and have err some refreshment and then lunch, thank you very much.

68:40 68:37 No Sound to 68:39  

68:39 [Audience Murmuring] to 68:40

 68:40 No sound to 69:30  

69:30 **End of Transcription** 