**Oral History Transcription - Sheila – St Cecilia’s**

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

**Filmed – 2016**

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: What is your background?]

00:00:10 [Sheila] - I grew up during the war. I knew... I lived in London all of the war, except for one fortnight when we had the V2 rockets, and we did go away to Bristol for a while, but we didn't stay. Other than that, school. I went to... I did pass my 11-plus with another girl, who became my best friend, 'cause we went up together. And we were keen cyclists. We travelled all along to the youth hostels, travelled... quite a lot of Southern England. Devon and Cornwall and all of south-east England into Essex and that side, East Anglia, on our bikes. Had a lovely time. One of the... If I could say, one of the happiest times of my life, 'cause all we did — we seemed to — was laugh. Drove our parents crazy, but we laughed a lot.

00:01:07 - My husband wasn't keen on me working, and fortunately, he had a good job, he was in the newspapers, so... But as the children grew older... And then we went through a bad... We went through a little patch. And my doctor said, "I think you should get a job. Get out of that house." So that's when I started back to work, and I went to work for Ministry of Defence. And that's where I met Jean, who also works there. That's how we... Our connection.

00:01:35 - We were friends when I first started in... it would have been 1971, I think, when I started to work for the Ministry of Defence, and we knew each other, but we didn't become... We were more like acquaintances. And then we changed offices and got closer. One thing led to another, and Jeannie, first of all, asked me to go to church with her. Elton Park Baptist Church. I went there, eventually there, and then she introduced me here. And that's how I started.

[Text on screen: What do you do at St Cecilia’s as a volunteer?]

00:02:11 - I come every Monday and Friday. And then I attend the events meeting, which, there is one tomorrow which I can't make. Um, there's gardening, and I used to do... There used to be a lady, Sylvia, who was upstairs, I used to do her balcony. And I'd do that on my own, the balcony, and Susan's, which is downstairs, but I can't do it anymore, because I can't kneel anymore. So I've had to give that up, and the gardening. Unfortunate, but that's just one of those things with age, but, um... No, I mean, there's lots of other little bits that we, you know, we call it. And really speaking, it's nice just to come to chat with residents, because sometimes, that's... It's like... Especially if they haven't got a family. Like our John, you know, just to chat with them for a while is something. That's social, you know, like socialising with them. But it's lovely to come here, anyway.

00:03:11 - I do do it a bit away from the home, like, I've been providing pots for... We used to have a raffle in the fete. So it would be spring/summer, I'd do pots that we raffled off.

[Text on screen: What are your memories of staff at St Cecilia’s?]

00:03:29 - Jo started here as, I believe - I didn't know then - but she started here as a teenager when she used to come — her mum worked here, and she would come in to help with her mum and she would help out on different of jobs. Sorry, different jobs. And then she came back to work here, and she worked her way up. And she was in charge of activities. She was an organiser. And with this, you know, with her organisation, she was also very, very enthusiastic. And she was a quick person. This is the bit I can always remember. She used to skate through. She seemed as if she was like a flash of lightning going through the building, you know. But, and so quick. And a lovely sense of humour. And I can still hear her laugh.

[Text on screen: How do you feel about volunteering at St Cecilia’s?]

00:04:22 - Coming here, I wouldn't give it up. I mean, it's just one of those things, you enjoy coming. You enjoy coming here. We have been here sometimes, we've looked at it, we've been here every single day in one month. And we make the joke of it, "We might as well have a bunk bed and sleep here." You know? It's not just volunteering, I... It's good, it's good for me. It's good for me, yeah. It makes... Yeah. Because it does teach you a lot, yeah. I mean...it's a pity you can't get more volunteers. They don't know what they're missing, really. 'Cause it gives you... People always say thank you to you, but we say thank you for that. Because it goes both ways, absolutely. Mmm.

**End of transcription**