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

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

**Filmed – 2016**

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: How did you start coming to St Cecilia’s?]

00:00:10 [Beryl] - It was my neighbour that first introduced me to the home. We came up for a garden party, and I must have filled in my name, um... for some... Must have entered something... So I entered my name, and then I received the newsletter every month, and at some stage, they were wanting ladies for shopping. They said that they had many men volunteers, but not too many of ladies. So I rang up, came up here... and, uh... made arrangements to take one of the residents out shopping. Went shopping. But once you're through the door at St Cecilia's, that is it. You are in.

00:00:59 - Then I was asked to help out in the craft room, so I helped Elsie Phipps, who was a member of staff. So I helped her in the craft room, and from then on… The home was run very differently in those days. 'Cause I'm going back over 30 years. I don't know. '84, '85.

[Text on screen: What was St Cecilia’s like when you first came here?]

00:01:20 - Lovely. It was a lovely family home. Well, things were so different. It's... It's very hard to explain, because this was obviously before the rebuild of the home. So all the residents lived on one level. No televisions in their rooms in those days. So there were many residents in the lounge. And from then on, I was on the welfare committee, management committee... Went out on so many trips... Theatre trips, pub trips... Football matches... Which was Charlton Athletic. Um... Oh, just so many. So many outings. Just wonderful.

00:02:06 - And because it was, you know, just on the one level, the sisters' office was downstairs as well. It was just... We were one big family. Same amount of residents, 30 residents, but all downstairs. We had two rooms which were two double rooms.

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

00:02:31 - I helped out in the arts room. And I used to help... We haven't got anyone at the moment that does it, but... painting by mouth. And residents that couldn't use their hands, that hadn't done anything for years, suddenly produced a painting that was put on the wall, and they were so excited. The first resident was a lovely girl named Jan. And I asked her and she said yeah, she'd like to try. But with watercolours, you can... With mistakes, you can make lovely paintings. And, you know, you would sort of wet the paper and then I would load the brush and give it to her, and she would try and bend forward. And all of a sudden, there was a daffodil or a poppy. And she was just so happy. Which made me happy.

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

00:03:32 - Jo organising all the garden parties. So much fun. And the events, discussing the tables... No, she was just... absolutely marvellous. You just had to... If you mentioned anything to her, she would just sort it out straight away. Come up, speak to Karen, and it's done. Yeah. No, she was, uh... She was just involved in everything. Absolutely. And we got on very well. Yeah, we were good friends.

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

00:04:13 - I just loved my time here. Absolutely love it. As I say, it's part of my life. And like my second home. I've loved all the... I love all the residents now, and I have such lovely memories of all the residents in the past. Beautiful memories. And some of them, I've... that I was with, you know, when they were extremely ill. You know, a sister would call up, call me... if they were short of staff to sit with residents when they were extremely ill.

00:04:51 - But, yeah. That's just been part of my life. People I meet say, "Do you still

go to the home, Beryl?” "Yeah, of course I do." And I have to say, I made not just friends with the residents, but friends with the staff, other volunteers... Um... Yeah, it changed my life. It changed my life completely.

**End of transcription**