**Oral History Transcription - Sue, Heatherley**

**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 – [Sue] Well, I was born in Horley, which is about three miles down the road from here. Spent my first seven years living in Crawley, in a little bungalow that my parents moved to after the war. And then we moved to Pound Hill, which, again, is five or six miles from here. So, um... this is very much my childhood stomping ground.

00:00:30 - In my father's role with the National Westminster Bank, he came across Leonard Cheshire, and was just so impressed with the work he did, he became treasurer for the Foundation. And that's sort of how I think we got our initial... Or my family became involved with Leonard Cheshire. But also, Dr Ginger Farrell was our GP in Crawley... And his wife, Pam, and Mummy were friends and so when Pam decided that there was a huge need for somewhere that would look after young disabled people, and she found out about the Cheshire Foundation... I suppose you'd call it a committee was formed and my mum was on that.

00:01:15 - So I have many memories of doing donkey derbies and fetes and things to raise money, to raise the 5,000 pounds to buy this house... oh, probably 12 years ago. Uh, when I was 12. So a very long time ago. And then when I left school, I wanted to do physiotherapy, But I had nine months to fill in, so I came here as a care worker. So that was over 50 years ago... I started. And that was... I loved that. A lady called Sylvia Fraser, who was a care worker as well, she might have been a nurse, I'm not sure. She used to give me a lift to Heatherley in the morning. And Mrs Mack was our matron, and very much in the sort of matron style, little white starch cap and the navy uniform, and... You know, it was sort of, "Look out, Mrs Mack is coming." But that was good - standards and things.

00:02:05 - And I absolutely loved it, because... Oh... Just human relationships, and got very fond of some of the residents. And obviously it was very different then, but then I left and did my physio training for three years, and then came back here. As a physio.

[Text on screen: What are your memories of Heatherley?]

00:02:27 - The residents were four to a room, with just curtains between. There was no sort of lovely room of your own, or... We still haven't got ensuite, I think that's the aim, but it was very much shared places. We used to have a fete every year, big fete, and David Jacobs, who some people will remember, he was quite a well-known DJ, he was very good to Heatherley. He used to come and open fetes and gave a lot of his time. And we had a ball as well, he was very involved with that. But we've always had a wonderful fundraising committee, people who have given so much time... and effort to it, for nothing. So we have been lucky, and they still are, these wonderful volunteers who are raising money so that Heatherley can still go on.

00:03:16 - There was always music and laughter and... I think the residents enjoy coming to physio. And probably talk to us... The care staff are like their family, and we're like friends, I think, perhaps. It was wonderful when residents got married. Many, many moons ago, one of our first residents, Gwen, she married her partner, Dick, and they went to live on the Isle of Wight, and that was exciting. And then Peter and Maureen got married, and that, again, was a wonderful day. Obviously the 25th anniversary, and the times that royalty have been down. But somehow... because life at Heatherley is so full of things going on, special events...I don't think have necessarily stood out for me.

00:04:07 - Mummy was involved till she died, virtually. She was in the 200 Club up to the age of about 93, so... And she used to be one of the volunteers who'd sit on the desk, she loved talking.

[Text on screen: How has Heatherley changed over the years?]

00:04:21 - When Heatherley started, it was very un-PC, but we called the residents 'the family'. And people like my mum and her generation of helpers still talked about the family, and then I think they became 'residents' and then 'clients' and 'service users'. I don't know what it is meant to be now. Residents, perhaps. But they were family, because it was a family. And it still is... It still is a family, I think. Everybody cares for everybody else. Things have changed, but people don't change. The actual people do, but their compassion and love and giving, it's all still there. Yes. I mean, the world... when you look at the news, is such an awful place. But when you come to somewhere like Heatherley, you think, "Actually, it's not so bad after all." How terribly grateful I am to have been part of Heatherley. And it is part of me... and always will be. I wouldn't feel the same about anywhere else. As I say, I've moved, and I'm volunteering somewhere else now, and it's fine, but it's not in my heart. Heatherley's in my heart.

**End of transcription**