**Film Transcription**

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

**Film Title:** Founded on Failure

**Duration:** 34 minutes 16 seconds

**Transcription Date:** 20th July 2016

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Please note: This document does not contain a transcript of the actual Audio Description for this film.

**Summary of Main Points**

**02:40 –**Leonard Cheshire talks about the origins of the homes

**08:37 –** the warden of Le Court talks about the way the home works

**11:46 –** Jim Best talks about his experience of living alone at the age of 18 while unable to walk, and how he came to Le Court. He also talks about his first impressions of life there.

**18:43 –** Jim Jaquest talks about his experience living in a senile ward of a chronic sick hospital before moving to Le Court

**21:55 –** Jim Jaquest explains about the laundry that is run by the residents

**22:18 –** Raymond Baxter reads an excerpt from a letter written by one of the residents, Harold Cole

**25:30 –** Harold Cole talks about his holiday to Guernsey

**26:24 –** the warden describes the hand loom that has been adapted for use by the feet for Joy Ernie

**27:42 –** Jim Best described the activities undertaken in the workshop by residents co-operating together

**30:00 –** Leonard Cheshire talks about the opening of a new home in India and his belief in peace

**32:40 –** newsreel of the Queen Mother’s visit to Le Court

**Start of Transcription**

00:00 [Black screen, no sound] to 00:13

00:17 [Music ] to 00:26

00:26 **Male Presenter**: I’m talking to you from the grounds of an old house in Hampshire… and behind me up by the hilltop lay the ruins of what was once… a stately Victorian house. This was Le Court… In this house 7 years ago Leonard Cheshire contemplated the failure of his hopes and ideals… Through this door came a former aircraftsman, dying and in need of a home. This, Cheshire provided and within 18 months 30 more of the chronic sick found a home beneath this roof. But the house was literally falling down and you see it here in the process of its demolition…But the experiment had begun to work… similar homes were founded in other parts of the country. Meanwhile, the problem was to re-house the patients to whom this hilltop was home… From no home to the building of this new Le Court seemed to them something of a miracle… Tonight Raymond Baxter is here with our outside broadcast cameras to hear Leonard Cheshire tell the story of this great experiment which started with this.

01:48 [Sound of atomic bomb exploding ] to 02:02

02:02 [No speech] to 02:10

02:10 **Raymond Baxter**: Good evening. The connection between that all too familiar plume of mushroom smoke and Leonard Cheshire is well known. He was of course the first British airman to see the atom bomb fired in action… but, the connection between that atom bomb explosion and the quiet parkland acres of Hampshire where you join us now is perhaps more obscure. And that Leonard Cheshire is my first question to you, precisely what is the connection?

02:40 **Leonard Cheshire:** Well peace… I was looking for some way in which I could contribute towards peace and having been one of the fortunate ones to survive the war, in common with many others I wanted to add my contribution towards the goal that we were fighting for. Well the atom bomb convinced me that the answer to peace lay in atomic energy and… so I came back to England, left the air force and I had planned to devote myself to errr…atomic energy. But of course I began to see the fallacy in this and that atomic energy was something of only the physical sphere and therefore couldn’t be the only key to peace. So I began all sorts of schemes to try and help other people I thought would do good… and of course…err…I launched myself into these schemes and I started… a kind of community scheme to try and help ex-servicemen re-settle themselves. You remember it was a big problem then. Well it was a very very well-meaning scheme but equally impracticable.

03:41 **Raymond Baxter**: Well the title of this programme is *Founded on Failure* and that was in fact failure number one.

03:47 **Leonard Cheshire**: Yes it was, and it was a very big one too. It was a failure. But it did serve its purpose because it…err…well it left me with this very large empty house and a huge number of debts…about 18,000 pounds, and everybody gone and I was trying to sort them out, and I was selling off everything I could lay my hand on, well that belonged to me, erm…to pay off these debts.

04:11 **Raymond Baxter**: And then something very significant happened.

04:13 **Leonard Cheshire:** It did! See I was still thinking of these various schemes and thought I’d go off and follow one of them when there suddenly appeared an old man who was dying and had no-one to take him in, and for want of anything better I took him myself.

04:28 **Raymond Baxter**: Hmmm hmmm…into the old house?

04:28 **Leonard Cheshire**: Yes, into the old house…err…and I…somebody offered to help me look after him and so that made me start… I took him in and …err…decided to look after him until he died.

04:40 **Raymond Baxter**: And that you thought was going to be the end of it?

04:42 **Leonard Cheshire**: Oh I did yes, I thought by that time I might have settled my debts and gone off and started one of my schemes.

04:48 **Raymond Baxter**: But other things happened, instead of one old man there came another-

04:51 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes –

04:51 **Raymond Baxter**: And another, and another.

04:53 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes, many…and err eventually the house filled up and err we got helpers and err the house became organized as a home for the sick.

05:02 **Raymond Baxter**: But then disaster again, the house started to fall down.

05:06 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes it did [laughs]

05:07 **Raymond Baxter**:…I mean you smile now but it left you in fact almost by yourself with 30 chronically sick people on your hands and the vital necessity either to evacuate them or build something else.

05:19 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes it did, but it turned out very well indeed because…erm…we knew the house had to be evacuated and we said well there’s only one thing to do get on with it and take the next step and that was to get an architect and ask him to design some plans.

05:32 **Raymond Baxter**: What about money?

05:33 **Leonard Cheshire**: Well we didn’t have any…we had an overdraft. What we thought was we’d buy as many bricks as we could with what money we had and start building and then stop ‘til we could get some more money. But that was put right because the Carnegie fund came along and they gave us this whole new building.

05:46 **Raymond Baxter**: Hence Le Court.

05:48 **Leonard Cheshire:** Hence Le Court.

05:48 **Raymond Baxter**: But about that time you relinquished your command as it were.

05:51 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes I did. I realised that I wasn’t very good at running a nursing home and that it was a little bit disorganized and I would have to call upon people who knew more about it than I did… So I, I was fortunate to get a committee and they, err, gradually took over the running of the house for me.

06:06 **Raymond Baxter**: And that left you free to do other things?

06:09 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes…it, err, left me free. I went off down to Cornwall and there the same thing happened… Another man came along who had no-one and no-where to go and he was ill – he was a naval man – and I, I managed to find an old building I could get for nothing… and took him in.

06:24 **Raymond Baxter**: This was Saint Teresa’s?

06:26 **Leonard Cheshire**: Yes it was Saint Teresa’s. It was an old RAF aerodrome, err called Cradanoch and we got the old headquarters block.

06:33 **Raymond Baxter**: But it looks very nice from outside, but I imagine inside as a place for taking care of the sick it was not all that could be desired?

06:39 **Leonard Cheshire:** No…as a matter of fact when we took it on the only inhabitants had been the cows…and then there wasn’t any drains, there was no electricity and no erm, water…but we got help we needed.

06:51 **Raymond Baxter**: And built the old bathroom.

06:52 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes, built the old bathroom – the Navy I think built most of the…did most of that.

06:56 **Raymond Baxter**: But nevertheless, that was RAF premises and I believe your next establishment was RAF too.

07:01 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes it was. So it was called, errr, Holy Cross…that was again a similar situation. We had somebody who was suffering from mental trouble, nowhere to go, and we took him in and we got the old WAAF headquarters on the same aerodrome.

07:13 **Raymond Baxter**: And where did you put him? In the billets?

07:15 **Leonard Cheshire:** In the billets, yes. Erm they were a bit rough but we gradually got them better…they’re quite nice now.

07:21 **Raymond Baxter**: And that is for taking care of the mentally sick?

07:22 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes it is.

07:24 **Raymond Baxter**: But they weren’t all RAF establishments that you took over…

07:27 **Leonard Cheshire:** Oh no, they weren’t. The next one was a very nice erm really suburban house in Bromley, errr…called St Cecilia’s now…and err that was done up by local help…voluntary help.

07:42 **Raymond Baxter**: That again is one type of establishment. I…errr, errr, suburban residence…but then you went in for the country homes of England.

07:49 **Leonard Cheshire**: Yes, a magnificent one. We’ve got an old country…um…errr…one of the stately homes of England, the Ampthill Park beautiful house.

07:58 **Raymond Baxter**: There we see Ampthill Park beautiful on the outside but on the inside pretty grim again.

08:01 **Leonard Cheshire:** In parts, yes…pretty grim in parts.

08:03 **Raymond Baxter**: Well all this of course is an indication of what has happened since Le Court, but you would agree I believe that Le Court was the prime… mover of the whole thing?

08:13 **Leonard Cheshire:** Yes it was, it was a spearhead and still really is.

08:16 **Raymond Baxter**: Nevertheless, since those early days as, we’ve heard, the precise command here has been taken over by a committee. Now perhaps the embodiment of the committee, the – shall we say – professional administration is the Warden of Le Court, and he’s a man with a diversity of problems on his mind.

08:37 **Warden**: Yes indeed…very broadly speaking we can say that the 33 patients who make up the family of Le Court have 3 general things in common. The first is that they all suffer from progressive incurable diseases that result in very serious physical disability. And then again and then again most of us are under the age of 40, and as such our only alternative would be the somewhat grim and sparse existence of life in the senile ward of chronic sick hospitals, surrounded by the very old and the dying. And then last but not least, and most…most important of all here at Le Court all members of the family have the unique privilege of being able to get around their physical disabilities and of having the opportunity of finding and re-gaining new ways of living full and useful and happily creative lives.

09:27 **Raymond Baxter**: Alan, I notice you say “we” when you refer to people here at Le Court but I think we should make it clear that you are in fact not a sick man yourself.

09:34 **Warden**: I’m not a sick man Raymond no…and I am not a doctor either [laughs]

09:34 **Raymond Baxter**: No [laughs]

09:38 **Warden**: A mere layman.

09:39 **Raymond Baxter**: Nevertheless, ah…we would like very much, if we may, to see some of the people you have here to illustrate the points you have been making.

09:47 **Warden**: I would very much like you to introduce some of the family, if I may, as we go on.

09:50 **Raymond Baxter**: Well who do we have there?

09:51 **Warden**: Well we have Albert Carter. He is the latest member of our family. He’s age 26. Since he was born he has suffered from one of these, errr…creeping paralysis diseases called Muscular Dystrophy, which – very briefly – means that he’s paralyzed from the waist downwards.

10:05 **Raymond Baxter**: And getting worse?

10:07 **Warden**: And getting worse… But he’s by no means un-occupied, or useless… as you can see [laughs]

10:11 **Raymond Baxter**: Well now, the chap next to him so busy with the spoons… he is manifestly over 40 if I may say so.

10:16 **Warden**: That’s our dear friend Billy Chap who comes from the Cotswolds. He is indeed over 40, which is now our upper age limit for admissions to Le Court…but he’s very young, errr, in spirit…and nothing can keep him from polishing shoes or cleaning glass or dealing with the tools of the household.

10:30 **Raymond Baxter**: Nevertheless you have more intellectual pursuits here… I know because I’ve seen them.

10:34 **Warden**: We have a Mr Sidney Radford, who suffers from a spinal disease called Ankylosing spondylitis plus rheumatoid arthritis, which means he can only lay in bed or sit perched on a special chair we had made for him,…but he can use his hands and does use his brain.

10:49 **Raymond Baxter**: What does he do?

10:50 **Warden**: Well principally, apart from making artificial jewellery of great beauty, he did start and now edits the Le Court magazine which is called *The Cheshire Smile.* It now has a very large circulation outside of Le Court.

11:01 **Raymond Baxter**: What other outstanding characters do you have?

11:03 **Warden**: Errr…we have, erm… Jim Best, who is a most outstanding personality indeed…in fact I should think he’s the most intelligent and most shrewd man I’ve ever met.

11:12 **Raymond Baxter**: Really? That’s a very forceful remark.

11:15 **Warden**: I don’t think it’s a question of cause and effect but at Le Court he has the reputation as being the man who runs the warden [laughs]

11:20 **Raymond Baxter**: [laughs] and here he comes towards us then, the man who runs the Warden…Jim Best!

We’re going forward to the television viewing room now to meet Jim as he makes his way down and notice how mobile and independent he is. He is, of course, crippled from the waist down –

11:36 **Warden**: Crippled from the waist down, very seriously handicapped and in fact he can’t move his hands from the level of the shoulders up either…but nevertheless he’s very active -

11:45 **Raymond Baxter**: Indeed he is.

And we’re waiting for him to emerge from the lift doors there now, and there are some interesting points about even that lift. The doors themselves of course can be swung open readily by anyone in a wheelchair, and the controls are in the lift.

12:00 **Warden:** The controls are in the lift, in fact all of what you might call the physical or environmental details of the home have been designed by the architect in consultation with the patients themselves because only they know how a misplaced light switch or a bath too high or too low can impinge on their possibilities of being independent.

12:18 **Raymond Baxter**: So you’ve got those details straight from the horses’ mouth.

12:22 **Warden**: Straight from the horses’ mouth.

12:22 **Raymond Baxter**: A very fine one indeed.

Well here comes old Jim, rolling in towards us, looking unbelievably smart.

Good evening Jim [laughs]. Jim – we have been watching you, as I have watched you before…working your wheelchair and it’s quite obvious to a glance that you’re very expert at it. How long in fact have you been chairbourne?

12:43 **Jim Best**: Well 8 years now.

11:45 **Raymond Baxter:** How did it all start?

11:46 **Jim Best**: Well it started when I was 14 and a half. But, erm I was told then that I hadn’t got many more years to be walking around and so… I decided that at 15 and a half that I would leave home and see as much and do as much as possible… I left home –

13:06 **Raymond Baxter**: Yes, what did you do for a job though? I mean it must have been difficult.

13:09 **Jim Best**: I went into a rehabilitation centre at Leatherhead and took a course in engineering inspection, from there I got my first job, which I held until I stopped walking.

13:23 **Raymond Baxter**: At that time then you were in digs, away from home, out of a job, and you’d stopped walking.

13:28 **Jim Best**: Yes. That was a bit rough then, because for 7 weeks after I stopped walking I was in lodgings on my own. My only means of getting about was to come down the stairs on my seat – bump down – and go along to the passage and to the sitting room for meals, on my knees, and then go back on my knees and go upstairs and stay on my own.

13:49 **Raymond Baxter**: And you were doing that, by yourself, for 7 weeks at the age of 18?

13:53 **Jim Best**: Yes.

13:54 **Raymond Baxter**: What happened then Jim?

13:54 **Jim Best**: Well, I had a peculiar piece of luck then because I knelt on a pin-tack and got blood poisoning.

14:00 **Raymond Baxter**: How was that luck?

14:01 **Jim Best**: Well it meant that, erm, I had to go to hospital…and, while I was in hospital anaesthetic forms had to be signed by my parents because I was under 21, and… that put me in touch - once again - with my family…. My father arrived at the hospital, found out all that’d been going on…said “not to worry, we’ll take you home, look after you.”

14:25 **Raymond Baxter**: I gather then when you went home that you were very dependent on your father?

14:29 **Jim Best**: Yes, he did everything for me.

14:30 **Raymond Baxter**: And then came the cruellest blow of all.

14:32 **Jim Best**: Yes, my father died, and… it nearly finished me. I had to go into hospital…and…while I was in there… I, again, took, errr…a fresh interest in my own life…and then life in general. Because there I found that, I was… not completely useless, I could do things for people who were much worse off than myself. They were tied to the bed, I was mobile in my wheelchair.

15:01 **Raymond Baxter**: And how then did you eventually come to Le Court?

15:03 **Jim Best**: Well that was the work of the almoner. She knew that…and the doctors knew that… I had a dread of state institutions, or workhouse, and I was fortunate because a vacancy came for a place at Le Court and so I arrived.

15:18 **Raymond Baxter**: And you were saying you were fortunate but in fact when you came here I know you didn’t like it.

15:22 **Jim Best**: That’s true. Errr… I was pretty unhappy at the fact that leaving hospital where I’d had so much fun… I didn’t like the countryside…it was dead to me, naturally – being a Londoner – but, erm –

15:36 **Raymond Baxter**: What about the old house? [laughs]

15:37 **Jim Best**: The old house? That shocked me a bit because the floor sloped and the walls were cracked…

15:41 **Raymond Baxter**: Yes –

15:41 **Jim Best**: And, I was a bit scared. Because it was the first time I’d lived actually with disabled people, in full civvy clothes.

15:52 **Raymond Baxter**: Provided they’re in pyjamas in bed, you didn’t mind? You liked it.

15:56 **Jim Best**: No –

15:56 **Raymond Baxter**: Because you could help them then?

15:57 **Jim Best**: No, it seemed more natural that way and errr…sick people, in pyjamas…fair enough. But errr, not all dressed up.

16:04 **Raymond Baxter**: But since then you have fitted right in to the community here?

16:06 **Jim Best**: Yes. I came here with the idea that while I’ve got a chance to start again…play a part in a community…be a full member of that community, and, so, I tried to do that, and… it worked out… for me.

16:24 **Raymond Baxter**: Jim, what do you think is the best example we could show first of all of this community spirit, this community entity which you have here?

16:32 **Jim Best**: Oooh, well there are many but I think the shop is our, one of our best.

16:37 **Raymond Baxter**: The shop?

16:37 **Jim Best**: Yes.

16:38 **Raymond Baxter**: And there you see it, patients and staff purchasing… and who’s running it?

16:43 **Jim Best**: Well that’s Jim Jaquest on the left there. He, erm, is the Treasurer of the Patients Welfare Fund and he handles all the money, does the ordering. Harry, the other patient, who errr does all the manual work that is impossible for a person in the chair to do.

17:01 **Raymond Baxter**: What about Jim Jaquest’s background Warden?

17:05 **Warden**: Well he suffers from this disease that’s Ankylosing spondylitis, that Sidney Radford suffers from and unfortunately he’s had a double amputation and has no legs. But I think he’s the most active person in the house.

17:17 **Raymond Baxter**: Where did he come from here?

17:18 **Warden**: He had many years, many fruitless years, in the senile ward of a chronic sick hospital and I think he might be able to tell you something about it when you meet him.

17:25 **Raymond Baxter**: We’d very much like to meet him; how how do we get him?

17:28 **Warden**: Well I think if you raise your voice and call he’ll [laughter], he’ll trundle in [laughter].

17:32 **Raymond Baxter:** [shouts] Jim! Jim Jaquest! Can you join us in the TV room please?

17:36 [No speech] to 17:38

17:38 **Raymond Baxter**: Oh well, message received and understood [laughter]

17:42 **Warden**: He’s mobile.

17:42 **Raymond Baxter**: He is extremely. By the way, erm, you may have noticed that we are bandying around Christian names here rather a lot. Well now don’t for a moment that that that’s because we think a chap who’s in a wheelchair isn’t entitled to be called Mister, such is by no means the case. But Jim Jaquest as he comes in to join us will, I think, have the answer to that one. [Turns to Jim] We’re talking about Christian names Jim.

18:06 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes. Well you see here at Le Court we prefer to feel that we are one happy family and, as in any other family, where you don’t call your brother or sister Mister or Miss, we like to be called by our Christian names just the same.

18:21 **Raymond Baxter**: Seems fair enough doesn’t it? Completely reasonable. By the way, just one thing. You may hear an awful amount of squeaking and groaning going on [laughs], well that’s because of these highly polished, errr, floors and the tyres of wheelchairs naturally skid when they go around corners, particularly when Jim’s driving, and so hence noises off stage, sorry about it. Well now Jim, you were in a senile ward before you came here.

18:43 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes, yes, you see after being in hospital for 10 years the time came when it was impossible for them to keep me there occupying a bed that was needed for operations any longer. And as there are not many homes like this, there was not room for all of us to be in, so the only alternative that could be offered me was a bed in the senile ward… And I spent 2 months in one.

19:11 **Raymond Baxter**: That must be pretty desperate.

19:13 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes it is a pretty grim affair, errr…the only thing that you can do there is just go through the motions of living…while at Le Court you can really live and be part of things.

19:25 **Raymond Baxter**: And how do you live and take part in things here Jim?

19:27 **Jim Jaquest:** Well here you see I can be Treasurer of the Patients’ Welfare Fund, and help with occupational therapy and one or two things like that you see.

19:39 **Raymond Baxter**: What were you doing before you were ill?

19:41 **Jim Jaquest**: I was a watchmaker and I had a certain amount of experience in business and figures in the shop.

19:51 **Raymond Baxter**: And so you’ve just taken in to this chartered accountancy without turning a hair?

19:54 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes. [laughs]

19:55 **Raymond Baxter**: Very fine indeed. Well now Jim that’s all very well but you can use your hands and arms, you can write and so on, but there are people here who can’t move a limb at all.

20:05 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes, that’s right I am more fortunate than many, but, there are others who still serve a useful part in the community because although they cannot use their hands, they use their head and brains and somebody else can use his hands for them to take –

19:23 **Raymond Baxter**: To come and go

20:23 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes. I mean one good example is Molly. She’s a grand character you know.

20:31 **Raymond Baxter**: And there she is. Well there’s the co-operation of well hands with sick hands. Warden what’s Molly’s background?

20:41 **Warden**: For many years Molly ran a very successful high level fashion shop in Glasgow. Ah but then some years ago Disseminated Sclerosis overtook her and her family life broke up. And after some fruitless years in hospital Le Court is very happy to be in a position of offering her a vacancy.

21:00 **Raymond Baxter**: Jim Best, how does it feel to have a lady of fashion in your midst?

21:03 **Jim Best**: Well it’s very good in many ways because it keeps you… up to the mark, and it’s a bit wearing too because she’s a bit of a bully [laughter]. I mean we have to shave if we sit at her table for breakfast [laughter].

21:17 **Raymond Baxter**: [laughs] Well that’s fair enough. Well there we see the hats which Molly makes, those were some of her work weren’t they James?

21:23 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes and there you see you get combination of brain with being used with somebody else’s hands.

21:30 **Raymond Baxter**: Yes and by the look of Molly’s face and what she’s saying I hope that she didn’t hear what you said Jim Best [laughter]… but it looks as if she may have done at that. Well now Molly makes these hats for her own amusement, though they’re very fine hats too, but, other activities here are more immediately connected with the day to day running of the establishment aren’t they?

21:50 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes I think another good example is the laundry.

21:54 **Raymond Baxter**: The laundry?

21:54 **Jim Jaquest**: Yes.

21:55 **Raymond Baxter**: Well how does that run?

21:55 **Jim Jaquest:** Well that is run by 2 of the other patients.

21:59 **Raymond Baxter**: A ha…well when you say run they don’t actually do the laundry –

22:04 **Jim Jaquest**: Well they do the sorting out of the laundry you see.

22:06 **Raymond Baxter**: Hmmm…who are those 2 people Warden?

22:08 **Warden**: Well we’ve got Antoinette Harcourt-Williams and Hugh Evans…they’ve been here for quite a number of years and are most valued members of the family…we couldn’t do without them.

22:16 **Raymond Baxter**: I must say, they seem to go about their task of checking the laundry with, ahem, considerable abandon [laughs].

22:21 **Warden**: Yes [laughs].

22:23 **Raymond Baxter**: That’s fairly standard practice.

22:25 **Warden**: Very standard practice…twice a week…Tuesdays and Fridays.

22:28 **Raymond Baxter**: And the way it’s done…is equally standard practice.

22:29 **Warden**: But I must say it’s most efficiently done…it’s not quite as slap-happy as it might appear [laughs].

22:34 **Raymond Baxter**: No I’m sure it isn’t. What other of your friends would you like us to meet James, do you think?

22:38 **Jim Jaquest**: Well there’s Harold Cole. He’s sitting out in the hall I just passed him as I came through just now.

22:44 **Raymond Baxter**: I think I… I think I noticed him. There he is… again his background Warden.

22:50 **Warden**: Harold Cole is a most remarkable character. He was alright until the age of 7…he’s now 24 but at the age of 7 he contracted a very insidious form of disease called Spina Bifida which in a word mean he stopped growing physically, though he certainly hasn’t stopped growing mentally…err..he had 13 or 14 years in chronic sick hospitals until 4 years ago we had the unique opportunity of offering him a vacancy here, and since then neither Harold nor Le Court have ever been the same.

22:18 **Raymond Baxter**: Well I can certainly vouch for that because I’ve met young Harold - Nipper - and in fact I’ve got a letter here, which he sent to us when we were thinking about this programme and obviously it presented some problems and we were told by the Warden, “ask the patients, they’ll tell you how to do it.” So we did. And Harold wrote us this letter and I’d like to read it to you.

*Before I came to Le Court I was in a hospital where the patients were all heart disease and stomach trouble, they were all old age patients. I was there for 2 years and I did not like it because they died quite often and it made me feel bad. Then I went to another hospital. Patients used to go there to get massage so that they could get better and go home. Some of the patients at this hospital were quite young. I was not there a year then I had to come to Le Court. I didn’t know anything about Le Court or of G.C.*

That of course is Group Captain Cheshire who is universally known as Leonard Cheshire around here.

*It took me 2 weeks to settle down but after that I seemed to like it very much. All the patients and staff were very nice to me, they gave me a wonderful 21st birthday party which I never dreamt of. I had lots of nice things from everybody here. I did manage to meet G.C. when I first came here. I thought he was a very good chap and full of good fun. I do honestly think that Le Court has changed my life altogether. I am very happy here, which I had not been for a long time.*

Well the letter goes on but…umm… now I think we’d like to meet Harold, could we?

24:52 **Warden**: Yes, I think you’ll find him in the hall.

24:53 **Raymond Baxter:** Right [getting up] I’ll go on out there.

24:55 [No speech] to 25:04

25:05 **Raymond Baxter**: Hello Nipper.

25:05 **Harold Cole**: Hi Raymond.

25:06 **Raymond Baxter:** We’ve been talking about you…what are you busy at now?

25:09 **Harold Cole**: Doing some embroidery.

25:10 **Raymond Baxter**: Embroidery?

25:11 **Harold Cole**: Yes.

25:11 **Raymond Baxter**: [picks up embroidery] Let’s have a look at this. Lovely work. How long have you been working on that?

25:15 **Harold Cole**: Erm…about, about a month.

25:19 **Raymond Baxter**: Is this a new activity of yours?

25:20 **Harold Cole**: Yes it is.

25:21 **Raymond Baxter**: What else do you do?

25.22 **Harold Cole**: Erm…basket making and…um…paintings.

25:25 **Raymond Baxter**: Mmmm mmm…but you don’t work all the time I know.

25:27 **Harold Cole**: No.

25:28 **Raymond Baxter**: Because you’ve just been on holiday.

25:29 **Harold Cole**: That’s right yes.

25:30 **Raymond Baxter**: [laughs] Where did you go?

25:30 **Harold Cole**: I went to Guernsey… and err it was a very nice experience because I really never been there before and also never been on a boat before but umm people there were very very nice to us…made us homely very well.

25:44 **Raymond Baxter**: Was the, err weather kind to you?

25:46 **Harold Cole**: Yes weather was marvellous.

25:47 **Raymond Baxter**: Did you go in the sea?

25:48 **Harold Cole**: Yes I did [laughs].

25:49 **Raymond Baxter**: Jolly good… so now I suppose you’re just waiting to go back to Guernsey again?

25:52 **Harold Cole**: Yes I am really [laughs].

25:53 **Raymond Baxter**: [laughs] Le Court’s not good enough for you… Back to the Channel Islands for Nipper this one!

[To nurse] Hello.

25:59 **Nurse:** Have you finished chatting yet?

26:00 **Raymond Baxter:** Not at all, we could go on all night I say. Do you want to take him away?

26:03 **Nurse:** No he wants to see the rest of the programme.

26:06 **Raymond Baxter:** You want to see the rest of the programme? My chap you are the programme!

[laughter]

26:10 **Harold Cole:** I know!

26:11 **Raymond Baxter:** Alright away you go Nipper…thanks very much indeed.

26:13 **Harold Cole:** Thank you.

26:14 **Raymond Baxter:** Bye bye man, see you later. Embroidery I suppose Warden is a fairly important aspect of the activities which you can –

26:22 **Warden:** Yes –

26:22 **Raymond Baxter:** Conduct here.

26:24 **Warden:** But not only embroidery. We go in for weaving, and one of our family Joy Ernie not only weaves but weaves with her feet. She’s a spastic paraplegic and has been like that ever since she was born. She hasn’t much movement in her hands and can’t speak very well, but she has got some control of her feet and we have been able to teach her to use with her feet a hand loom… and only a few weeks ago she gave me a very charming birthday present in the form of a scarf woven in my old college colours.

26:51 **Raymond Baxter:** How very charming and she’s the sunniest little soul in the place I can assure you. Well there we see a hand loom adapted for the use of the feet.

27:03 **Warden**: Yes.

27:04 **Raymond Baxter:** And this question of adaptation is a very important part of helping people to play their part in the community. There’s another very simple example there.

27:13 **Warden:** We’ve got a friend called Phyllis Trow who suffers from very bad form of rheumatoid arthritis. We found that…ah…her only position would normally be laying in bed but if we could have mocked up a form of chair tailor-made to suit her particular disability she’d achieve a great measure of independence…and we did that in our workshops and now she can get up for herself and sit down for herself.

27:34 **Raymond Baxter:** Well there then we have seen another example of adaptation but now where are we now Jim Best?

27:42 **Jim Best:** This is the pavilion. It’s our…erm…workshop and we can make a mess here and make a noise, do what we like basically. Those 2 lads, that’s Neville and Leonard. They’re both on fret saw. We like to try and do the things that people want to do…use machinery as men normally would do outside.

28:01 **Raymond Baxter:** Why are 2 chaps on that machine Jim?

28:02 **Jim Best:** Well for the simple reason that 1 chap alone couldn’t handle that piece of wood with the hands err that they’ve got.

28:09 **Raymond Baxter:** I see.

28:10 **Jim Best:** So 2 co-operating can do a job.

28:14 **Raymond Baxter:** Well you mention machines…there’s a man size machine indeed.

28:16 **Jim Best:** Yes. That’s Ted, he he was used to ah, umm, using machinery before he was disabled…and… when he, err…was became disabled he was spent his time in hospital and did nothing and was in a senile ward. And so coming back here, he got his press.

28:36 **Raymond Baxter:** What about his chap who’s obviously engaged on photography. Was he a photographer before?

28:41 **Jim Baxter**: He worked err, a great deal on photography and he had all his err, paraphernalia…he brought it along with him and a darkroom was provided for him. And it’s been a great asset to us…to be able to use him, but…

29:02 **Raymond Baxter**: You use him, he uses you.

29:02 **Jim Best**: Yes.

29:03 **Raymond Baxter:** That’s about it isn’t it?

29:04 **Jim Best**: We use his photographs for publicity…for our…for our work you know, to try and raise our own funds.

29:12 **Raymond Baxter**: Or as part of the community again. Well I don’t know…we’ve shown you a lot of things…in a very short time. I don’t know if they may have confused you a little, they may even perhaps have surprised you. We have invaded this place with our lights, and our cameras, and our noises off stage, and we have shattered the peace, which I promise you abides here. We have tried to show you a spirit…and a spirit is a very elusive thing. And I think that the best man to sum up for us and show you to what this spearhead Le Court is aimed is the man in whose company we started this programme, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire.

30:00 **Leonard Cheshire:** Well errthis all this started for me right out in the East err, over Nagasaki at the dropping of the atomic bomb. And over there I conceived a great desire to play my small part as best I could, in contributing towards a peace that everybody had fought for so hard. The trouble was I didn’t know how to go about it and I set about many plans, until eventually I was brought here to this house where I met this old man…and err I had no option but to look after him because there was no-where else for him to go. And from that there grew the other homes that we have, and err these homes have spread over this country and to my great surprise they’ve now spread out to India, and we have there our first home opened and err in a, a short while, a few days’ time, together with several helpers I will be going out there to see this first home and to see if we can’t start any others. Err…the story from the beginning has been rather a story of ruins. It started over ruins, with a story of ruined health, and err ruined lives, and err, ruined bank balances, and err ruined houses, and now we have rather a ruined bus which we’re putting together ourselves and we hope to drive out anyway partly over land, partly by ship out to India. Now all this has shown me that err peace in the last resort can depend, only depends upon God. And God will give us peace in proportion to the sacrifice we’re prepared to make for it. Peace isn’t just a question of politicians, it’s a question of each of us at our own level doing what we can to bring peace in our own lives and in those of our fellow men. As it were many small drops going out to make the one big ocean of world peace.

32:00 [No speech] to 32:28

32:28 [Black screen, no speech] to 32:37

32:38 [Newsreel on screen]

32:38 [Music] to 32:40

32:40 **Male narrator**: Le Court, one of Group Captain Cheshire’s communities for the disabled was visited recently by the Queen Mother. She was welcomed by the Leonard Cheshire, who founded this home in Hampshire 8 years ago. All 34 patients in residence are suffering from some serious disability but here they’re given every chance to overcome it. The Queen Mother saw something of these facilities and the use made of them. It’s been proved that an interest in life is the first step towards re-gaining self-confidence. No-one at Le Court will face a future of loneliness and despair.

**33:09 End of Transcription.**