**Oral History Transcription - Maggie - Hydon Hill**

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

**Filmed –** 2017

**Start of transcription**

[Text on screen: How did you get involved at Hydon Hill?]

00:11 [Maggie]: We had to go to this funeral in Germany where I met Leonard, and I wasn't... I had worked a little bit but it didn't work out with young children, but when Leonard said could I join the fledgling management committee for Hydon Hill, that seemed a wonderful possibility to use my talents without being... working and being paid. So, that is how it all started.

[Text on screen: What was Hydon Hill like in the early days?]

00:43 - All there was here were the wooden huts, and I have to say it really looked like Stalag Luft 3 without the barbed wire. It was, if you look at Ev's photographs you'll see that. And we had to try and clean it and clear it and try and, we were taking over a lot of residents who had come here because they were too old, there was an upper age limit for LCF in those days and these residents were because they were too old. So we inherited a lot of very ill, very geriatric people living in wooden huts. The central building is where our central building is now, but it was another wooden hut. The residents all lived in the chalets, and had to come over to the main building for every meal, wind, rain, shine, snow. Pushed over with bicycle ponchos on. And it was very hand-to-mouth, it really was. There was... there was... the cooking was done on a... I think they were commercial AGAs but they were certainly very old ranges. They failed on Christmas Eve, and so there was a rather hectic ring around 'could you please cook turkey, potatoes and bring it up here’. We managed to do Christmas lunch.

02:05 - And we built it up from there. We got a lot of people who were passionately  determined that this should work and Leonard was much better known then and therefore we gathered together people who were going to give a lot of time and a lot of energy towards running this place.

[Text on screen: What did you enjoy about your role?]

02:28 - Quite early on in the history of Leonard Cheshire I started saying residents need activities. I'm an occupational therapist. So I set up an activities centre and I ran that, I came up most mornings really, when the children... I either had an au pair or when the children went to school, and I could spend the morning up here. So I would leave the home problems when I left the drive at home and pick up the Hydon Hill problems and reverse it on the way home. And that worked. I had one lovely resident called Leena who said 'I want to do some cooking and I want a pork chop with a kidney in it’ so we did that, on a little Baby Belling and we got a bottle of wine and she invited friends, and we had a lunch up there and it was, it was very simple and awfully sweet.

03:17 - After the management committee I was chairman for four years, and to be chairman you can't do anything unless you've got a wonderful head of home, and I had two. I had Gordon Mitchell, who was ex-Scots Guards. If he'd been the navy he'd have run this like a ship, because it's, it is a unit on its own. He lived on site, with his lovely wife and ran it, I mean, really all I had to do was come and support him once a week and he... it was wonderful. Even during the October '87 storm, he was here and... you knew that it was in good hands. And the other person was Brian Parkinson who also was a wonderful head of home.

[Text on screen: How do you feel about your time at Hydon Hill?]

04:00 - Because I worked with Leonard, I have got this charismatic thing that he gave everybody that he met, that makes you passionately want to make it better and if I can do anything, I don't do as much now, I'm getting old and crumbly, but if I can do anything, which will ensure that this place goes on, whether it's here or somewhere else, whatever, then I really will feel I have accomplished something.

**End of transcription**