**Oral History Transcription – Oral Histories Compilation**

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

**Filmed –** 2017

**Start of transcription**

00:04 [Linda]: I was very nervous because I hadn't been away from home before. The only place I'd been away from home was boarding school and I didn't stay there 'cause I wasn't happy. But I love it here. I'm very happy here.

00:33 [Interviewer]: You enjoy the company?

00:37 [Linda]: Yeah, I enjoy the company. Everyone's very friendly, we all help each other as much as possible. And we've got good care staff. We're all happy here.

00:51 [John]: I immediately felt among friends, as you enter the Hydon Hill you came to a huge lounge, which has now been replaced by new rooms, and it was the hub of the whole place. You'd meet the Head of Home, he wasn't called a Service Manager, he was called a Head of Home. And you were immediately in the lounge with a whole host of residents. And that's how I remember my first trips here.

01:27 [Ranjana]: When you came here first, you had to share a room, and there were three double rooms. Yeah. So you kind of lived in half a room. Yeah. And it was, you know, from having a wonderful flat to then coming... But, you know, in a way, it was quite good, because... it forced you to get to know somebody quickly. And, in fact, I couldn't have asked for a better roommate. Molly was a lovely lady, and her husband, Tony. And he still comes in, he still volunteers... and drives for us.

02:06 [Maggie]: 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. And we built it up from there.

02:53 [Cynthia]: I moved on and worked onto nights as a carer. I've progressed throughout my career with Leonard Cheshire Disability, but mainly at Mote House, I was on night duties.

03:08 [Interviewer]: And were there any strange events that happened at night there? It was a very old building, wasn't it?

03:14 [Cynthia]: It was and we had what was called the Grey Lady. There was a ghost called the Grey Lady down the back stairs and you would hear things: bed pans falling off from the bed pan holders. People were frightened to go up the back stairs and I think staff probably scared each other: "Don't go up there because the Grey Lady's there." But I've got fond memories of Mote House.

03:33 [Sue]: 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. And I absolutely loved it, because... Oh... Just human relationships, and got very fond of some of the residents. 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.

04:08 - 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."

04:28 [Daphne]: There's a nucleus of volunteers who've been around a very long time. And we've got far fewer volunteers now than we did have, again, it's a change in society, because most women are working now, and the time when we started there was a pool of ladies whose families were grown up, who hadn't got jobs and were prepared to do voluntary service. And now they're just not there, so, the volunteers are fewer, but we're still getting some very good ones. We still get some excellent young volunteers, who are still at school, and they're very good too.

05:05 [Ev]: We looked after ourselves, you know, we did our own fundraising. If we, like when I started we only had one overhead hoist in the entire... that was in one of the bathrooms and we obviously, you know, needed a hoist in, as we have now, in each room. To get that, to get those we had to, to fundraise, go out and... Each, each hoist cost £1000, so each time we collected £1000 we bought another hoist. And that took, took us about three years, to do that, but we did it.

05:47 [Barry]: We never used to have any hoists when I first came. 'Cause people used to just... The staff used to just stand me up, transfer me over to my bed or transfer me over to my chair by standing me up. Now, the health and safety come in, they gotta use hoists now, and that is taking away part of your independence 'cause you're not used to using hoists. I can do most things myself, really.

06:28 [Carol]: Technology is getting more and more incredible really. You think 'well how have they done that?' It's true, but it happens. I mean look at this wheelchair, you know at one time when my mother was in a wheelchair you had a little hand wheelchair and somebody pushed you. Now I can drive myself about in this, as long as I don't kill anybody, they don't mind. It's easy to drive. I can go out in it. I can, I can go anywhere. It's really quite incredible.

07:23 [Gary]: This, this POSSUM is my lifeline, it really is. I couldn't live without it. without that machine I couldn't work my TV, my lamp. It's called an envir..., an environmental, an environmental control system and it... Mind you they don't give them away willy-nilly, to get one of these machines you have to be assessed by a doctor, and they have to know what your needs are. So without it, Andrea, I couldn't do anything, it's a valuable bit of kit. In this day and age technology has come on in leaps and bounds, and I'm truly grateful for what, what I have.

08:30 [Beryl]: 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. But, yeah, no. It’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**