

MAGGIE'S

February 2024

“Nobody should lose the joy of living in the fear of death.”

Margaret Keswick Jencks (Maggie)(1941-1995) #2339 came from a high-achieving family. The Keswick business dynasty was founded in the 19th century when Scotsman **William Keswick (1834-1912)** #978 joined the Far Eastern business of **Jardine Matheson** whose origins were in the opium trade. The story of the family across five generations is told in their biographies on the family tree, but it was the third generation **Sir John (the Younger) Keswick (1906-1982)** #985 whose daughter, Margaret (Maggie) founded the cancer charity which bears her name.

Following **H M The King's** diagnosis it seems appropriate to tell Maggie's story.

Maggie was a writer and garden designer. With her father, she founded the Holywood Trust (south-west Scotland) and the Keswick Foundation (Hong Kong). Her book on Chinese Gardens is widely regarded as a classic on the subject and she was commissioned for many garden and interior design projects.

When Maggie was 47, she was diagnosed with breast cancer and five years later, in May 1993, she was told that it had returned and was given three months to live. After hearing this, Maggie and her husband **Charles Alexander Jencks (1939-2019)** #6738 were moved to a windowless corridor where they were left to process the news. While sitting in that corridor they discussed the need for somewhere 'better' for people with cancer to go, outside, but near the hospital. Maggie joined an advanced chemotherapy trial and lived for another 18 months. During that time, she worked closely with her medical team, which included oncology nurse, Laura Lee, now **Dame Laura Lee DBE**, and 23 years later still Maggie's CEO, to develop a new approach to cancer care.

Maggie believed it was important for people with cancer to be informed participants in their medical treatment and researched cancer centres across the world to find ways in which people could live better with cancer. She envisaged, for the first centre, a welcoming and positive space in which people with cancer, and their family and friends, could meet other

people in similar circumstances and receive support including advice on their treatment, how to manage stress and get psychological help.

After her diagnosis, Charles not only supported her through her treatment but also in her idea of better spaces for people with cancer. He encouraged her to set up the very first centre that bears her name and after her death continued to champion the huge importance of environment in helping inflicted patients and their families. That first centre was near the hospital where Maggie was diagnosed. Since then, Maggie's has gone from strength to strength and now has 26 UK centres and 3 International, all based on her determination that **"people should not lose the joy of living in the fear of death."** Her son, John and daughter, Lily are both Honorary Patrons, and Maggie's Centres are welcomed and admired world-wide. **H M The Queen** is their enthusiastic President. Surely this equips her well to tend His Majesty through his treatment?

The Trust and all our families wish him a speedy and complete recovery.

Anthony Cobbold