



humanity in motion

PRESS RELEASE

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rotary in London/district 1130
district governor Colin Mathews

Rotarian Shares the Journey that is Cancer

In the Daily Telegraph magazine of 15 December 2007, featuring the experience that goes with treatment for cancer is a piece featuring Rotarian Sheila Hughes, wife of District Governor 2007-2008 for District 1230, Western Scotland.

In the spirit of this year's theme – Rotary Shares – Sheila and Andrew (Drew) Hughes have been giving talks about their experiences of cancer, and Maggie's Cancer Care Centres. Maggie's Centres were based on the experience of Maggie Keswick Jencks, a Scottish architect who succumbed to breast cancer in 1995. Her experience in the UK compared to her experience in a Wellness Centre in the US inspired her to raise funds for a drop-in cancer centre. The first centre opened in 1996 and there are now five centres in Scotland; a further seven centres are due to open in the UK by 2012. The central feature in each centre is a large kitchen table that people can sit around and talk to each other; in addition each centre provides counselling, information about the treatments, and about benefits available to patients.

Below a photograph of Sheila and Andrew taken by Maggie's Centres patron Sam Taylor-Wood, Sheila talks about her personal experience of breast cancer, chemo-therapy and how she was determined that her illness would not spoil her daughter's wedding, the birth of her first grandchild and finishing her thesis for a PhD.

She is quoted as saying "Having cancer is like going on a journey to a strange country. You don't know if you are going to survive the journey; you've got no map; you got no compass; and you've got to drag your family along with you. Maggie's has been down that journey many times before and it can help you. You know that your family is suffering too, so you put on a brave face. You can go to Maggie's and be completely honest and say how bad you feel and build up your strength to face your family."

Shortly after giving her interview for the Daily Telegraph Magazine, Sheila learnt that the cancer had metastasised to her liver and spine. She said that the news only underlined how important it was to enjoy each day, and how Maggie's helped her do that. "There's no point thinking about dying. You might as well get on with planning how to live."



Sam Taylor-Wood's photo of Sheila & Drew Hughes

Sheila and Andrew will be in the thoughts of all Rotarians in Great Britain and Ireland as they cope in the coming months.

For more information on Maggie's Centres visit <http://www.maggiescentres.org>
For more information on Rotary in London email: prcomm@rotaryinlondon.org

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