

Deirdre Battista

Bringing people together

Her legacy

Deirdre Battista was involved with the building of the Peace Pagoda at Willen Lake and had an abiding respect for the nearby Buddhist community. This led in 1990 to her organising the UK leg of the Sacred Run for Life, which started in Milton Keynes and went across Europe to Moscow, promoting the native American fight for tribal land rights, simultaneously celebrating the post-Cold War era in Eastern Europe.

In the early 1990s, she engaged 58 groups across the city, mainly women and children, in producing the One World Quilt of Unity, which was unveiled to coincide with the United Nations Earth Summit in 1992 and hangs in the Guildhall at Christ the Cornerstone.

In the late 1990s she project managed the building of the Medicine Wheel/ Millennium Sculpture at Willen Lake.

The quilt and the medicine wheel both symbolise togetherness, celebration and well-being - those precious, but nebulous, aspects of neighbourliness and community.

Her life

Born in Wendover South Bucks in 1943, Deirdre came to live in Bletchley in 1967, and from the time of the 1970s Greentown Movement in Milton Keynes has been a community activist and facilitator. She seeks to celebrate the diversity of our communities and to encourage active, spiritual responses to challenges. In her own words, 'Human relationships are the most important things to me. We are all one spirit, in different bodies... that's why I constantly try to bring people together, and this is what guides me'.

Main image: Deirdre Battista 2017

- 1: Deirdre in 1990 with monks and nuns from Willen, MK Mayor Roger Bristow and Chief Oren Lyons from the Onondaga Nation
- 2: Circle of Hearts Medicine Wheel, Willen Lake North
- 3: Milton Keynes One World Quilt of Unity



“ The quilt is a celebration of life and an expression of the responsibility we all share in contributing to change in our world. ”

Handbook, The Right to Hope tour, 1995, celebrating 50 years of the United Nations

“ [It is] time for women to step forward and tell the truth, leading the building of communities. ”

Roy Littlejohn, the leader of the Millennium Medicine Wheel project

“ The best thing about The Medicine Wheel/ Millennium Sculpture is that it appears to have settled down as a place of unity and peace. I am sure due to [her] involvement. ”

Neil Higson, Senior Landscape Architect, MK Development Corporation



Teresa Collard

Bringing the arts to the people

Her legacy

Teresa Collard was Arts & Entertainments officer for MK Borough Council in the years 1975-84. In this role she founded and directed the February Festivals of the Arts (1979-84), which raised the artistic profile of Milton Keynes and laid the foundations for the MK International 'IF' Festivals from 2010 onwards.

She helped to found the Jennie Lee Theatre in Bletchley Leisure Centre, the first performing space within a leisure centre, as well as the MADCAP Community Action Project in Wolverton.

She was also part of the consortium that successfully campaigned for the Milton Keynes theatre and art gallery complex.

Her life

Teresa Collard was born in 1923. She attended schools in Bridgnorth, Shropshire and Northampton before training in drama at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and embarking on a career in arts management. On coming to Milton Keynes in 1975, she was excited by the prospect of developing the arts within a new city where everyone was beginning a new life.

In her role as director of the annual February Festival of the Arts (1979-84), she enjoyed seeing new work created at local level, as well as bringing high-calibre performers to perform in small venues such as leisure centres and schools – in other words taking the arts to the people, rather than the people to the arts. She was especially proud of attracting world-class orchestras to Bletchley Leisure Centre and setting up the original art gallery in the shopping centre.



“ She was the... driving force behind the MK February Festival... responsible for the commissioning of more than 60 new works [and] probably more efficient at extracting money from local companies than the Inland Revenue... Her tenacity was largely responsible for putting the new City on the Arts map. ”

Dr Mike Bullivant, nomination speech for Open University honorary degree, 12 May 1984

“ Milton Keynes Theatre and Gallery make an outstanding contribution to the cultural life of Milton Keynes [and] provide a broad educational programme that has engaged thousands of our children. ”

Dr Euan Henderson, former Mayor, 'Milton Keynes Theatre and Gallery Company: the first years 1999-2005'



Main image: Teresa Collard 2017
1: February Festival Brochure 1984
2: Milton Keynes Theatre and Gallery
3: Teresa Collard in 1975 (MK Gazette)

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Contact: miltonkeynesfawcettgroup@gmail.com

November 2017

Avril Dankworth

Making music fun

Her legacy

Avril Dankworth founded the Avril Dankworth Children's Music Camps at The Stables in Wavendon in 1970. Now known as the National Youth Music Camps, each year they bring together 7 to 17 year olds of all musical ability levels who learn to live together and share music. The camps have inspired thousands of young people, many going on to successful careers in music.

Her life

Dr Avril Dankworth (1922-2012) was born in Southend into a distinguished musical family. As a Girl Guide, she discovered the power of friendship through music, and of music as a social activity. Trained at the Royal College & Trinity College of Music, she was an innovative teacher, singer and accompanist.

Avril moved to Milton Keynes in the late 1960s and taught at the Teacher Training College in Bletchley Park. A co-founder of the Sing for Pleasure movement, she embraced the Dankworth family philosophy of breaking down barriers through music. She remained Director of the National Youth Music camps for 30 years and wrote several books, including the influential 'Jazz' and the best-seller 'Make Music Fun'.



“ Music is life for me. When you enjoy something so much you want to transmit the feeling to others. Music is fun. ”

Avril Dankworth

“ She was inspirational ... didn't just have ideas but made them happen. She was great fun, an enabler and full of enthusiasm... I attended one of the earliest music camps. It was a week that changed my life... Inspiring and liberating, it shaped my musical thinking. ”

Sarah Watts, Artistic Director of National Youth Music Camps 2001-14

“ It's a really wonderful idea. Some of the children can't play, but that doesn't matter. We hope they will learn to love their music. I am sure this idea will grow and grow. ”

Sir John Dankworth, London 'Evening News' 7 August 1970



Main image: Avril Dankworth 1993
1: National Youth Music Camps
2: Avril in the late 1960s
3: The original Music Camps logo
4: Avril as a Girl Guide in 1936
(all images by permission of Dankworth family) 4



Margaret Durbridge

A grassroots voice amongst professional planners

Her legacy

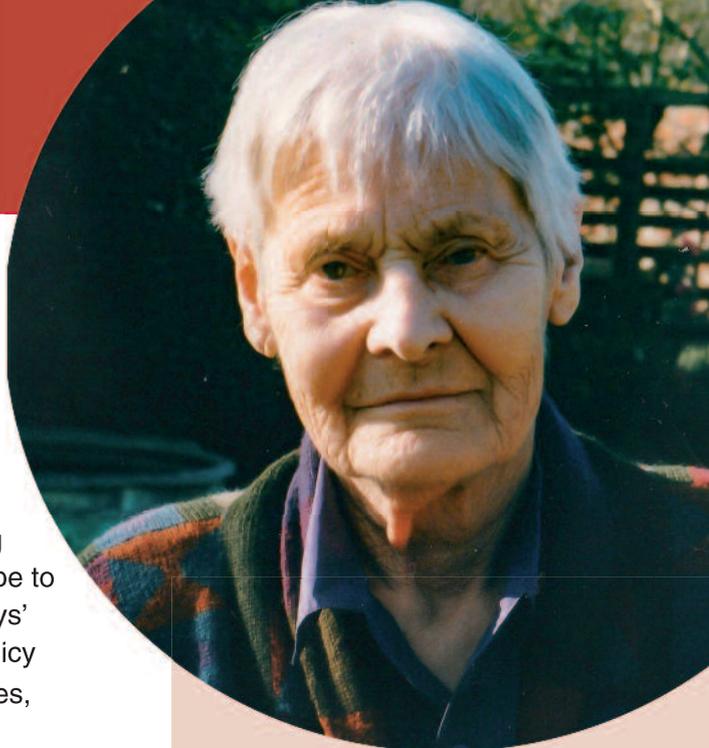
Margaret Durbridge OBE understood that innovatory planning for Milton Keynes could address social deprivation. Margaret was the only woman invited to join Milton Keynes first strategic Planning Board. She worked on the Transportation Group, travelling to Europe to bring back ideas for MK cycle ways and pedestrian routes: 'Redways' that linked communities. She also chaired Milton Keynes Social Policy Committee. For her contribution to the development of Milton Keynes, Margaret was awarded an OBE in 1977.

Margaret was also an artist producing public works, including in her 80s patchwork quilts hanging in Milton Keynes village church.

Her life

Margaret Durbridge (1911-1999) was born in London into a 'bohemian' family of scientific professionals who were deeply socially committed. She trained as a graphic artist but, more broadly, was a creative thinker, an artist and a 'maker', with an interest in sciences.

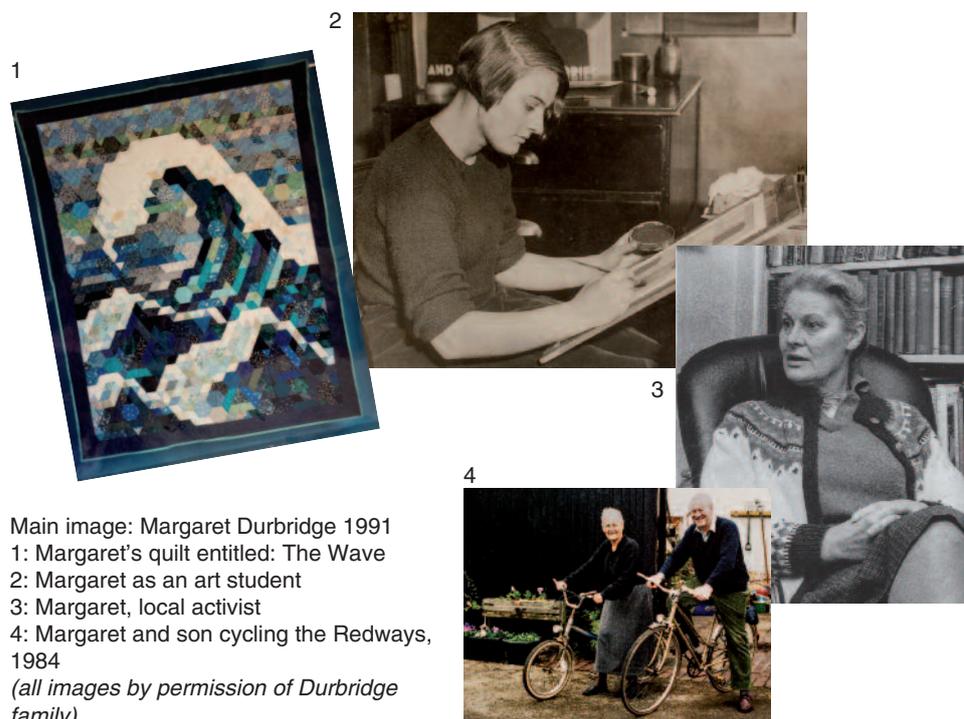
In 1936, as a young wife she came to Gayhurst, moving to the Mill in Newport Pagnell in 1939, where she campaigned for better flood defences and improved sewerage. She housed evacuees during World War 2. In the 1950s and 60s she was a school governor, a Justice of the Peace, a County Councillor and Chair of the Education Committee. Her reputation for working for the local population led to her invitation to join the Planning Board for Milton Keynes in 1966, and in the 1970s the Open University Council. She was a dynamic social reformer.



“ When one of her children was at nursery school Mrs Durbridge complained, doubtless with her usual combination of charm and firmness, about the cleanliness of the lavatories. From such small beginning began a career in public service which she has graced with charm and distinction...

She [served] with great ability, combining imagination, tolerance and firmness... showed great sympathy for individuals... demonstrated judgement and discretion and... always retained a strong sense of humour. ”

Professor James Barber, nomination speech for Open University honorary degree, 14 June 1975



Main image: Margaret Durbridge 1991
1: Margaret's quilt entitled: The Wave
2: Margaret as an art student
3: Margaret, local activist
4: Margaret and son cycling the Redways, 1984
(all images by permission of Durbridge family)

Jane Henshaw

An enthusiasm for getting involved

Her legacy

Jane Henshaw was responsible for facilitating the accreditation of Computer Studies in MK schools – later adopted nationally by BTEC.

She was the first manager of the Education Business Partnership, liaising with schools, working with the Engineering Council, and pioneering teacher placements with major industries like Aston Martin. She was commissioned to produce a promotional film on engineering, encouraging girls to enter traditionally male provinces.

Her life

Born in London in 1945, Jane grew up in Yorkshire and arrived with her young family in Milton Keynes in 1971. She contributed tirelessly and enthusiastically to the vision of a new community carving its own direction. She embodied and helped to build the 'can-do' approach in MK.

In her early role as a community worker she engaged with initiatives in deprived areas of the city. As well as working with the MK Health Authority and the Community Health Trust, she also gave 25 years of service to Willen Hospice as a trustee and member of the Hospice Council.

Leading the Education Business Partnership project, and working with major industry and MK headteachers, Jane organised placements for schoolteachers to update technical and scientific skills. The Partnership realised that computer education in schools needed to be taken much more seriously, so Jane worked to organise curriculum development and certification for MK schoolchildren, with the Chamber of Commerce as the validating authority.



Main image: Jane Henshaw 1992
1: Jane shaking hands with Princess Diana during her visit to Willen Hospice in 1986 (photograph by Roy Campbell, NUJ)
2: Aston Martin, Newport Pagnell
3: Early BBC computer



“ Jane involved herself in a wide range of civic activities...being, at various times, a senior executive in various Training and Industry initiatives, a mental health manager at MK hospital, a trustee of Willen hospice and a trustee of a country wide charity providing homes for the elderly. She has been one of the prominent individuals in the development of MK's Health, Social and Educational developments. ”

Malcolm Brighton, OBE, retired businessman and PCT Chairman

“ Computer (and music) education in MK schools ... were well ahead of the times. ”

MK Parent

“ Jane's Executive Shadow project involved 6th formers closely observing how managers did their jobs, not dogs-bodying as interns. ”

Marion Hill, local social historian and former senior educator

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November 2017

Matilda Kessler



A bolder vision

Her legacy

Matilda Kessler was appointed Magistrate in 1965 and, at a time of major change, initiated inter-agency sessions to support young offenders.

Her unique book 'The Story of the Magistrates Courts in Milton Keynes', published in 1988, traces the local justice system from 15th Century onwards.

Along with Margot Kettle she founded the first local branch of the Citizens Advice Bureau in Bletchley in 1971. Acorn House in Central Milton Keynes now deals with thousands of enquiries every year.

Her life

Matilda Kessler (1915-1990) had a strong commitment to public service and voluntary work. This can be seen early on in her support for evacuees in World War 2.

She was particularly concerned about addressing juvenile crime effectively, and was involved with the Mental Health Association and the development of the MK Conciliation Service.

She identified the need for volunteers 'who are prepared to come forward with sufficient time to do increasingly complicated and demanding work', and had a talent for slotting people into exactly the right place where their skills could best be used.

She was also an Open University Council member 1974-1985, where amongst other things she was influential in setting up the staff crèche. In 1986 she became an honorary Master of the University.

“ Matilda Kessler was a strong, resolute and decisive woman, who was the most unstuffy officer one could hope to serve under.”

Citizen's Advice Bureau tribute

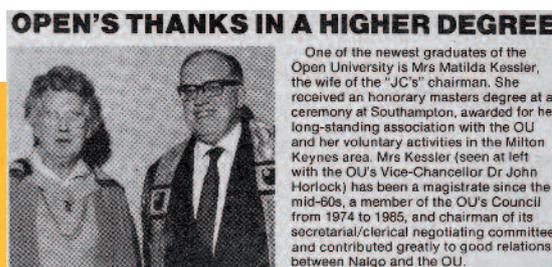
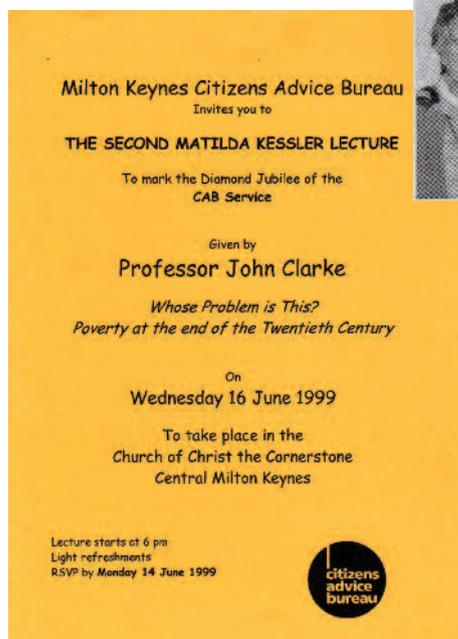
“ [She was] responsible for the establishment of the Bureau and for many years was its leading representative in the community.”

Report of the Citizen's Advice Bureau, 1990

“ [This] award was motivated by consideration of her extremely active public life... her contribution to the community in which she lives [and] her consistent and untiring work in building a bridge between that community and the [Open] University... Her chairmanship was always sensibly and gently exercised.”

Professor Richard Holmes, nomination speech for Open University honorary degree, 9 April 1986

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Main image: Matilda Kessler 1980
1: Matilda Kessler Memorial Lecture programme
2: Jewish Chronicle, 2 May 1986
3: CAB Milton Keynes logo



Contact: miltonkeynesfawcettgroup@gmail.com

November 2017

Creating an icon for the City

Her legacy

If you know nothing else about Milton Keynes, we suspect you will have heard of our famous Concrete Cows. The cows were made as part of a four-year community arts project run by Liz Leyh, Artist in Residence (1974-78)

Liz received the first bursary funded by the Arts Council, England, to live and work in a 'New Town'. The Social Development Department of Milton Keynes Development Corporation also supported this project by converting a space at Stacey Hill Farm into a 'sculpture' studio. Adults and children built the cows over a period of two years.

The cows have become iconic for Milton Keynes. The city's affection for them has grown over the years, as have their national and international status as examples of 'New Town' community art.

Today they stand in the grounds of Milton Keynes museum with replicas beside the H5 road at Bancroft.

Her life

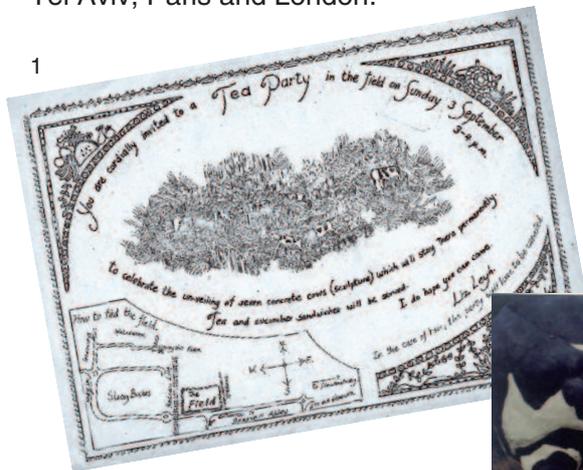
Liz Leyh was born in Utica, New York, USA. After receiving a Master of Fine Arts Degree, she emigrated to England in 1976. Throughout the years she has made her own 'personal' sculpture alongside working with groups in their communities. She has exhibited her work in New York, New Orleans, Tel Aviv, Paris and London.



“ One of the true innovators in relating the arts to the community. Her sculptures are full of memories for those who made them and a lasting pleasure for those who find them. ”

Peter Stark, Lecturer in Arts Administration, City University, London

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Main photo: Liz with sculpture 'Cabbage' 2017
1: Tea party invitation 1978
2: Liz with 'Cows' 1978
3: 'Cow' 1978
(all images by permission of Liz Leyh)

Margaret Powell

A great gift to the people of Milton Keynes

Her legacy

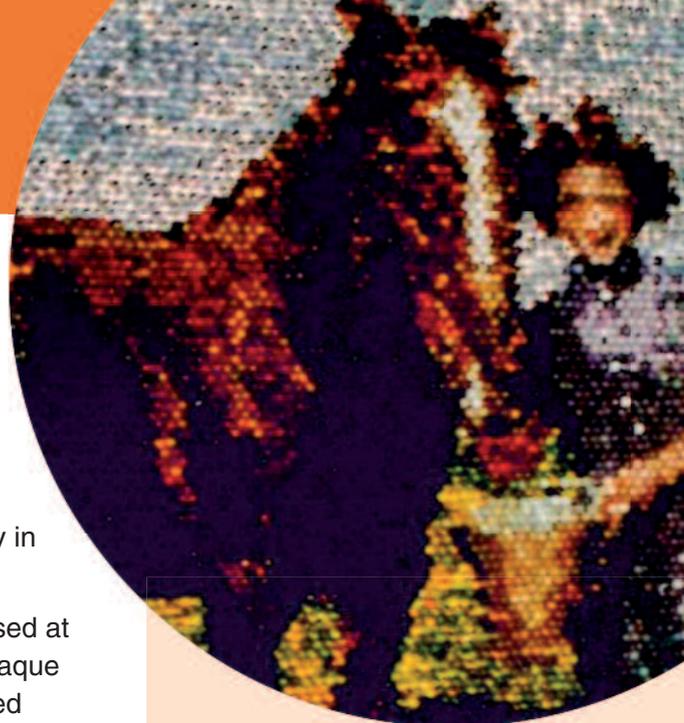
Margaret Powell's £2M bequest was used to establish The Margaret Powell Foundation, which exists to improve the quality of life for people in Milton Keynes. The fund now gives up to £250,000 annually in grants, and since its inception millions of pounds have been granted.

The MK Community Foundation, which now manages the fund, is based at Margaret Powell House in Midsummer Boulevard, where there is a plaque honouring her contribution. The Milton Keynes Theatre, which received a large grant to enhance the facilities for older people and people with disabilities, hosts a prominent artwork in her honour.

Various other items of art and architecture around the city have also been named after her.

Her life

Margaret Powell (1921-1992) was a sheep farmer at the family farm at Tattenhoe Bare, who left a huge bequest to establish a charitable fund in Milton Keynes. Her simple wish was for her generous bequest to be used to help the frail, elderly and disabled of MK. We know little of Margaret herself, but her vision and compassion have been of great benefit to the people of Milton Keynes.



“ [The Electric Sheep installation at MK Theatre] is a brilliantly conceived and executed piece. ”

Roy Nevitt, MK Theatre Consortium

“ The MK Community Foundation team is proud to be the solution for Margaret's generous gift. Our long-standing relationship with the trustees enables us to honour Margaret's values and build a lasting legacy for our city. ”

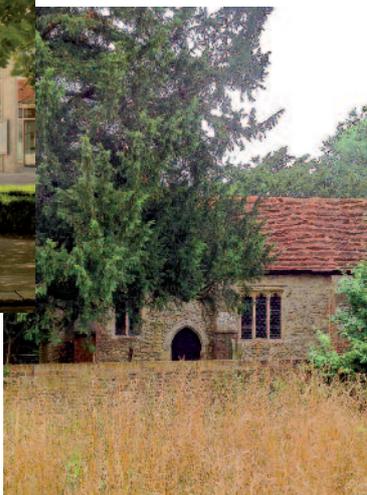
Julia Upton, Chief Executive, Community Foundation



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Main image: A mosaic image of Margaret Powell by Mee Kyoung Shin (2000)
1: Margaret Powell Square
2: 'Electric Sheep' by Bruce Williams (2003), commissioned artwork in MK Theatre foyer
3: Tattenhoe church



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Marjorie Reid

A hospice for Milton Keynes

Her legacy

Dr Marjorie Reid was co-founder and first medical director of Willen Hospice, which opened in 1981 to provide specialist end-of-life care for adults in Milton Keynes. As well as the in-patient unit, the hospice offers community care and also supports families and carers.

An extension to the hospice, built in 1993, was named after Marjorie to commemorate her work.

Her life

Marjorie Reid (1924-1990) was a GP in Winslow. She launched the idea of a hospice in 1974, at a time when the hospice movement was still in its infancy. Willen Hospice would go on to revolutionise end-of-life care in Milton Keynes.

Marjorie was inspired by her Christian faith: the full name of the hospice is 'The Hospice of Our Lady and St John', after the two people who remained with Christ as he died. She worked tirelessly to convince others - including local medical professionals, the Council and potential funders - of the need for a hospice, and built up a committed team inspired by her ideals. Her co-founder, district nurse Dorothy Jell, shared Marjorie's vision and worked with her, but sadly died before the hospice opened.

Marjorie wrote that hospices were places of love and laughter. There was a need to understand patients' feelings, needs, hopes and fears: they should be supported to live until they died.



“ The vision of one woman has had an impact on innumerable families ... There can be very few people in Milton Keynes who have not heard of the hospice. [Nationally it] is recognised as being in the forefront of hospice care. ”

Reverend Leslie Jell, at a thanksgiving service for the life and work of Marjorie Reid

“ She had a great talent for persuading people to do things they had never really thought about, and to give more than they expected of their time and money. ”

Jean Maughan, first nurse at Willen Hospice, in Marjorie Reid's obituary



Main Image: Marjorie Reid 1980s
1: Willen Hospice
2: Statuettes of Our Lady and St John in Willen Hospice grounds
3: Willen Hospice logo

Margaret Sale

Saving Bletchley Park

Her legacy

Margaret Sale was a leading contributor to the saving of Bletchley Park for future generations, spending 25 years as a volunteer and 16 years as a Trustee. Without Margaret's commitment and continued hard work, Milton Keynes would not have the heritage it can boast of in Bletchley Park and The National Museum of Computing.

Her life

Margaret Sale was born in 1932 and taught in a secondary school, helping students with special needs and teaching English as a second language. She later left teaching to work in accountancy whilst raising a family.

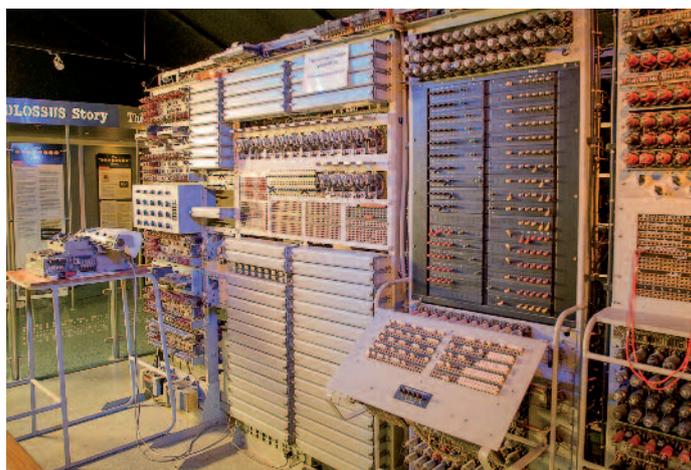
Margaret's life was changed dramatically when she attended a reunion weekend in October 1991 for the staff who worked at Bletchley Park during World War II breaking the German codes and ciphers. She was inspired to devote the next 25 years of her life to fighting for the recognition and funding that was needed to conserve and develop the site. Margaret also worked with her husband Tony Sale, who was determined to re-build the first computer – Colossus. Today, she can be found on most days acting as a guide at The National Museum of Computing, where she is also a trustee.

Margaret Sale's work and continued service has been recognised by three awards: the Sunday Telegraph/Waitrose British Volunteer Awards in 2012; the Milton Keynes Women's Community Impact Voluntary Award in 2016; and a UK Points of Light Award in 2017.



“ No celebration of the Save Bletchley Park campaign would be complete without expressing gratitude for the dedication and invaluable role of Margaret Sale and her late dear husband Tony. As a Colossus veteran, I can only be grateful for their devotion to this cause. Without their work, Bletchley Park would not be recognised as the home of Colossus, nor would its vital war time achievement of breaking Lorenz messages be acknowledged. It provides educational opportunities and inspiration for all ages, at a time of growing artificial intelligence. ”

Irene Dixon, veteran operator of the very first Colossus, news release from The National Museum of Computing, October 2016



Main image: Margaret Sale 2017

- 1: Colossus machine
- 2: Margaret Sale checking running instructions for Colossus
- 3: The National Museum of Computing



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