

BARBARA PETTENGELL

"DAME CICELY SAUNDERS - born: 22.6.1918

Cicely started the modern Hospice movement in England in the 1960's. Originally she went to Oxford University to study politics, philosophy and economics when she was 20 years old. However, at the start of World War 2 she left Oxford and became a student nurse at St.Thomas's Hospital in London, until a back injury forced her to leave nursing. She returned to Oxford and earned a B.A. and a Diploma in Public and Social Administration, then she went on to train as a Hospital Almoner - (Medical Social Worker today).

In the course of her work she met a 40 year old Polish refugee, David Tasma, who was suffering with inoperable cancer. Cicely realised that there was little or no help for terminally ill patients at that time and she began volunteering as a nurse at St. Luke's Hospice in London so that she could learn more about the needs of patients with a terminal illness. She then decided in 1951, when she was 33, to become a medical student. She completed her Medical Degree in 1957 and she became the first modern doctor to devote her career to dying patients. She then began working at St. Joseph's Hospice in London's East End. In 1967 her long-held idea of a Hospice becoming a home within a hospital reached fruition. She founded St. Christopher's Hospice as the first such Hospice, and under her guidance it became the first Hospice to link together expert pain and symptom control with compassionate care.

Dame Cicely was awarded a CBE in 1980 and awarded the Order of Merit in 1989.

She died on 14th July, 2005, aged 87, at the Hospice she founded - St.Christopher's"