

### Diamond Valley Community Hospital



Local resident Gemma Sprague has had two personal experiences of the Diamond Valley Community Hospital, and remembers them both as very happy times of her life.

Gemma's first experience was a personal one in 1973, when their third child Haydn was delivered by Dr Ted Cordner and has fond memories of her stay in the four bed ward with the pull around curtains for privacy. As new mums they all helped each other and there was a real camaraderie between them all.

Gemma said that she had an advantage however because she was a midwife and it was her third baby and in those days the babies were kept in the nursery and brought out for feeding, visiting hours were strict and the bell would ring for visitors to leave the hospital and also for viewing the babies at the nursery window.

This was a popular time for families, Gemma muses, thank goodness times have changed and babies can be with their mothers now except if unwell, premature or requiring care in the special needs nursery.

FEES FOR HOSPITAL SERVICES (Current as at 1st July, 1972)		VISITING HOURS
4 bed ward Maternity	— \$18.00 per day	Daily: 2.30 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. 7.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.
4 bed ward General	— \$23.00 per day*	A bell is rung shortly prior to the end of each period to enable those wishing to see newborn babes to do so at the nursery window.
2 bed ward Maternity or General	— \$23.00 per day*	
Single bed ward	— \$30.00 per day	Children are welcome as visitors provided that the rules of quietness are observed.
Single bed ward (with en suite bathroom etc.)	— \$35.00 per day	
It is important to note that these fees are subject to change. Please check on admission. *Equal to H.B.A. Intermediate Schedule (ML2).		

Gemma's second happy experience at the Diamond Valley Community Hospital came in 1990, this time it was in a professional capacity and was so excited to be employed in

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the very popular maternity unit as a part time mid wife and was her first job since having a family and returning to work where Haydn was born was an extra bonus.

The Hospital had grand plans for refurbishment including a brand new maternity section with deluxe and large delivery rooms. Gemma remembers that from the time she began work there, there was a special feeling between patients and staff. It was such a happy place and the food was especially good with homemade everything, very yummy for morning and afternoon teas and so with the new rooms came a big marketing push with tours and open days.

Bookings increased and it became very busy in the maternity ward and Gemma says that there were times when new babies were born in makeshift nurseries because the deluxe suites were full so there was a buzz with all this activity and clients were happy to be part of the transformation.

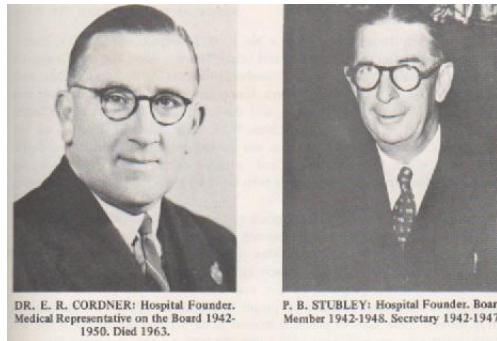
Everyone seemed to pull together and the hospital was such a happy place so we were all sad when the hospital was taken over by the Mercy in 2000 and many of the staff were employed at North Park Private Hospital, Gemma being one of them.

Gemma said that it has been a privilege to be asked to write these memories and she is glad that the staff of the Diamond Valley Community Hospital still have annual reunions at the Greensborough R.S.L. with lots of memories coming to the surface at these times.

The Diamond Valley Hospital can be traced back to a house built in the early 1900's for Louis Amiet the Head Teacher at Greensborough Primary School who used to take the children there for nature study where they would have their lunch and do a bit of weeding.

An advertisement in the Hurstbridge Advertiser March 9 1934 announced that a private hospital would be opening, catering for midwifery and medical attention and the first private seven bed hospital opened in May 1934 with Sister C.W. Avery and one assistant in charge, and was the only hospital in the Diamond Valley area.

In 1940, there was talk of closing the hospital down, but a decision was made to keep the hospital running until 1942. In 1940, the concept of a community hospital had been raised during a casual conversation between Dr E. R. Cordner and Mr P. B. Stubley of Greensborough about the closing of the small hospital. Both men agreed that it was imperative that the Diamond Valley area should have its own hospital. From this germ of an idea the Diamond Valley Community Hospital became a well loved icon in the Diamond Valley area.



The Diamond Valley Community Hospital was officially opened on Saturday January 10 1942 by Mayor of Heidelberg Councillor W. A. Santon with a large crowd present. Special gratitude must go to the committee of the James Trust which helped make this possible and continued to support the hospital for over forty years. This hospital served the Diamond Valley residents well until a new hospital was built 1950-1956 remembering that at this time (1950s-1960s) Greensborough was still a rural area.

The Hospital and its services expanded during the 1950s and 60s due in part to the fundraising of the local community, including auxiliaries in Greensborough, Diamond Creek, Montmorency and Eltham.

Over the years the whole of the Diamond Valley community held and supported many fund raising events for 'their hospital' with one idea published in the Diamond Valley local in 1954 by the wife of a Pantom Hills orchardist who suggested "There have been 1,200 babies already born in the hospital and many parents live in the Diamond Valley area therefore if each child's birthday was celebrated with a 5/- donation, this would bring a valuable donation scheme".

Between 1942 and 1971 over 29,000 patients were admitted and more than 10,000 babies born at DVCH. Over the decades, the hospital had grown from its original 7 beds to a 76-bed facility. Sadly, due to financial circumstances, the hospital closed in 2000. The buildings remain and a variety of health services are provided on the site.

By Gemma Sprague and Rosie Bray

