

When you gave birth at the PMH nurse's quarters, did you see and/or hold your daughter there after birth? Were you supported? Were you able to feed your daughter?

When I gave birth to [REDACTED] in my room in the Nurses Quarters Matron [REDACTED] was given [REDACTED] to hold and she held her close to me so I could see her. I don't remember holding her or my Mother holding her. I'm pretty sure my Mother had been sent out of the room while I was giving birth. Matron [REDACTED] and the Assistant Matron were very caring as soon as they came to my room. I was very close to having [REDACTED] when they got to me. A Baby Bundle was sent for but [REDACTED] arrived before it did. I was asked if I had anything to tie the cord and as I only had some knitting wool that was used until some proper equipment arrived. Matron [REDACTED] actually said nothing this exciting had happened to her before, she told me [REDACTED] was beautiful. I didn't feed her before being taken to St Anne's.

Who made the decision that you should again go to St Anne's? Do you remember the reasons? Did you get a say? How did you feel about this plan?

I assume the Ambulance had been requested straight away. I assume someone would have contacted Dr [REDACTED], my GP, and the decision made to send me to St Anne's Hospital as soon as possible as it was an unexpected delivery. I don't remember being consulted but it was an emergency. As I was still a minor I presume my Mother had a role in the decision and as Dr [REDACTED] was the only doctor I had seen, a couple of weeks before, I would have been admitted under his care.

When did you get taken to St Anne's? Was it the same day you gave birth?

I don't remember the journey but was taken straight away and I presume the ambulance paramedic looked after [REDACTED]. I'm pretty certain at no stage did I hold her.

How were you and [REDACTED] transported to St Anne's? Were you together? Who else was with you?

No one went with us in the Ambulance just the paramedics. My Mother went back to work.

Do you remember who took [REDACTED] away? Did you know where she was?

I was taken to a treatment room and didn't see who took [REDACTED] but assume she went to a treatment room as well to be properly examined. I don't remember anyone discussing it with me.

Do you remember who told you you were not allowed to see [REDACTED]? Did they give any reasons?

I was seen by a Dr who sutured the tear I sustained giving birth a couple of hours before. I was sutured without any local anaesthetic and told it was what I deserved. I was then taken to a ward bed and attended to by the Nuns. As I was traumatised and so ashamed and it would have been evening I presume I was just left to sleep. I think my breasts were bound but I was in no state to question anything.

During all this, did anyone ever mention adoption? What was said if so?

I'm pretty sure it was just assumed by the Nuns that as I wasn't married the baby would be adopted, especially with my history.

Was [REDACTED] given any other name at St Anne's? Who decided that if so?

I am not aware that she was given a name.

Before you went and sat outside Sister [REDACTED] office, were you given anything to stop your milk, or were your breasts bound?

I was given a tablet to dry up my milk but not sure if it was the day she was born or the next day but I remember I didn't swallow it and put it in the back of my locker drawer.

Aside from the doctor who stitched you without anaesthetic, what kind of care did you receive that day? Were you given any drugs or medication at all?

I don't remember if I was given any other medication.

Are you able to provide more details of how you got [REDACTED] back? For example:

1. What was Sister [REDACTED] role at St Anne's?
2. Was it only Sister [REDACTED] you interacted with, or other people?
3. Was your mother or anyone else with you for support, or were you alone?
4. Do you remember what was said in any conversations you had?
5. How long did you refuse to leave for before [REDACTED] was returned to you? How did you manage this?
6. What happened when she was given to you – what was said? What reasons were given? What did you do?

I was looked after by the same nuns I knew from when I had [REDACTED]. I don't remember if it was the day after I arrived at the hospital but I was alone when I went to Sister [REDACTED] office. I said I was not leaving until they gave me my baby back. I said they couldn't have this one as well. I sat there for a few hours before I went into her office. I don't know but presume she contacted my Mother. I was very determined so nothing they said would have changed my mind. I went back to my room and they brought [REDACTED] to me. I just held her tightly and cried.

Did you stay at St Anne's with [REDACTED] nearby after she was returned to you? If so, what kind of care did you receive?

I stayed at St Anne's with [REDACTED] near me during the day and she went to the nursery at night. The Nuns were kind once they knew I would not change my mind. They helped me to start breastfeeding [REDACTED] and took good care of my tear.

How many days after birth did you leave St Anne's?

I was in hospital for 10 days I think.

Do you have any records from your time at St Anne's? If not, have you tried to get them? What happened?

I enquired about getting my hospital records prior to putting in my submission but it would have taken too long to get them and I was trying to keep to the deadline. My daughter [REDACTED] had tried to get her birth records several years ago and was told a lot of the records had been lost. I still have the forms so may enquire if there are any of my records available.

Once you weaned [REDACTED] at 11 weeks, how was she fed? Was it affordable to feed her this way?

When I weaned [REDACTED] she was given SM33 formula in a bottle and started on some solid foods like Farex. As I returned to my nursing training and working full time I was able to afford her food even though I was renting a room near the hospital.

Did your grandparents know about your first daughter, [REDACTED]? What was their attitude towards you and [REDACTED] when you lived with them?

My grandparents never knew about [REDACTED]. They died at 70 and 66 in 1975 and 1976. They were always very supportive of me all through my life. It was a 2nd marriage for both of them and my father was my grandmother's only son. As he had moved to Victoria I was, as his daughter, very cherished.

When I rang them in a distressed state after finding [REDACTED] lying face down in vomit in her cot when I got home from night duty and the couple I was staying with obviously hadn't checked on her they came within an hour to pick us up and take us to their house.

They were very loving to [REDACTED] and I and cared for both of us when we lived with them and they looked after [REDACTED] after I was married and had returned to work to finish my nursing.

What more can you tell us about achieving maintenance from [REDACTED] father?

1. Did you know anything about this when you had [REDACTED]?
2. How did you or your mum find out you could seek maintenance and how to apply?
3. What was involved in getting the maintenance order?
4. Which office did you deal with and did you get help from them?
5. Was it a reasonable sum you were paid in maintenance? Did it cover what you needed for [REDACTED]?
6. When your then-husband adopted [REDACTED], did the maintenance end?

I knew about maintenance when I had [REDACTED] as my Father paid maintenance for me as my parents had been married. With [REDACTED] was so brain washed that she was not mine to keep so it never came up. I did not know where her birth father was as he had left Perth before I knew I was pregnant.

I had no intention of asking for maintenance from [REDACTED] birth father as he had made it clear, even after seeing me in St Anne's and holding her that he didn't want us in his life. I had not told him I was pregnant so didn't feel I had a right to ask him.

My Mother insisted I apply for maintenance or she would wipe her hands of me. As she was the only parent I had in Perth and even though she hadn't shown me much support because of my stepfather I did as I was told

As Mum knew how to apply for maintenance she made the arrangements. Not sure if it was because I was still a minor. I can't remember the name of the company and any paperwork seems to have been lost over the years.

I had to attend court alone as it was a closed court with [REDACTED] and my lawyers a clerk and the judge. It was a very traumatic experience. My supposed friend who had worked with [REDACTED] and introduced us was asked for a list of names of boys I knew. They were mostly boys I had gone to school with but due to having had [REDACTED] and working shift work and studying I had not been out with anyone. [REDACTED] lawyer went through the whole list asking if I had slept with them.

I was awarded \$4 a week which was worth a lot more in those days but certainly didn't cover many of [REDACTED] expenses but it appeased my Mother.

[REDACTED] approached my husband and myself and said he would organise and pay the costs for [REDACTED] to adopt [REDACTED] so the maintenance would cease as he was now married.

Did you receive any other financial support when raising [REDACTED] (apart from work income and the maintenance)?

Until I married my work income and the maintenance was all I received as far as I can recall. I don't think child endowment payments were available for a first child

Raising [REDACTED] while working and studying must have been tough, but you did it. Is there anything you'd like to say about what was required to make it through when you were a single parent? Did you have the money you needed to meet your and [REDACTED] needs? Who supported you?

Working and studying was tough especially living so far from the hospital as well as caring for my child. I could not have done it without my grandparents help and support. Being a single unmarried mother I had a lot to prove to myself and others that I could manage and be a good mother. I knew I had to complete my nursing training to be able to give my daughter a happy secure life. I also needed to finish my training to repay Matron [REDACTED] for believing in me, not once but twice, and allowing me to complete my training. A rare thing in those days when girls were ostracised. As my grandparents were so kind to let us live with them I was able to manage financially as I didn't have to pay rent but I paid board money and tried to manage as much of [REDACTED] care as I could and paid for her formula and baby food. As disposable nappies weren't used hand washing nappies didn't cost much.

Over the years, have you come across other people who were unmarried when they gave birth but managed to keep their baby? Do you have any observations on this?

When I was nursing there was another nurse who joined in my final year who had kept her baby but we didn't know each other well. I got married in November 1969 on my 21st birthday and completed my nursing training in May 1970 and my first son was born in October. She and I were both married and pregnant when we graduated. My husband and I agreed to have a baby early in our marriage so there was not a big age difference between [REDACTED] and the baby.

Is there anything else you'd like to add about your experiences?

Unfortunately my marriage did not last beyond 14 years. We both married with a secret as he did not know about [REDACTED] and I did not know about his daughter that had been adopted as well. Unfortunately he was unfaithful many times during our marriage but I realised in later years how shut down emotionally I must have been. I have always admired him for going against societies norm and marrying a single mother, possibly because he lost his daughter and he felt he was rescuing me. He was very supportive of me finishing my training which must have been hard as he moved out of his parents home to our home and took on caring for [REDACTED] on his own a lot of the time as I still had to work shift work and study. [REDACTED] was also diagnosed as profoundly deaf after we met but he cared for her and loved her.

Unfortunately I have not been able to maintain a relationship with a man for any length of time which I truly think is due to my history of rejection and loss. To my credit though I am in friendly contact with [REDACTED] birth father [REDACTED], whom she has a good relationship with although he lives in Queensland. From being an only child she now has 9 siblings.

[REDACTED] father, [REDACTED] met her when she was 18. I think there was always some lingering doubt that he is her father but when we met at Adoption Jigsaw he immediately said she has his grandmother's nose and she is 6ft tall and [REDACTED] is 6ft 5inches. That day they went off and played Pool. They had a good relationship with [REDACTED] happy to be involved when she had her children visiting her often at her home and attending some of our family functions. Unfortunately he cut off contact quite abruptly as his wife didn't want him to see her anymore and as she has always refused to let her meet her brother and 2 sisters. The rejection was very hard on her. I am still in contact with him at his request to let him know how [REDACTED] is going as well as his 2 grandchildren.

My exhusband and I slowly regained our friendship. His second wife has always been open to including me in family gatherings in my or their home which I always felt is important for our children. For too many years they had to divide themselves between 2 houses at Christmas and birthdays.

I feel proud for us all to be able to show that our children are loved and wanted in our lives. I feel responsible for the mess I created but happy that we can all be friends.

I hope what I can remember is helpful to the enquiry.

Warm regards

Cheryl