

ALBURY'S OLDEST PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Cheryl Ryan

Chelvey stood on the site of the Hume Bank in Olive Street. Many will have known it as the "Old Mercy" but its story begins earlier in Albury history.

Built in the late 1800s, it had been the family home of Dr Arthur Andrews, local medical officer and historian. He was also a noted coin collector, and office bearer on numerous Albury civic committees.

In 1902 the home was listed as Clifton Lodge Private Hospital with E M Samuel as matron. The hospital soon became known as Chelvey again. Sister Meredith was matron before the Walsh sisters Minnie and Lizzie "late of St Vincent's Hospital Sydney" took over the private hospital in February 1908. Their sister Hilda was also on staff. Another sister Kathleen was matron of the Albury District Hospital.



Chelvey Private Hospital, Olive Street

A child born in the hospital in 1904 was named Olive Chelvey Schuller - Olive for the street, Chelvey for the hospital.

Minnie died at Chelvey in 1939. The 'Albury Catholic Record' of 1952 reported that three Bugden sisters, Margaret, Alice and Kathleen leased the hospital in 1942 and "walked worthily in the footsteps of their predecessors." They returned to Queensland in 1945 when the lease expired.

Meanwhile plans were made for the Sisters of Mercy from Goulburn to establish a Catholic hospital in Albury, and Chelvey was available. When the Sisters of Mercy arrived to open the Mercy Hospital in May 1945 it was described as "the oldest private hospital in Albury."

Five Sisters of Mercy arrived in Albury to run the hospital - Mother Colombiere, Mother Hugh Berrell (matron), Sisters Agatha Collins, Mark Ryan and Dorothy Hamilton. Staff also included four trained nurses. The hospital was registered as a general hospital and equipped for eighteen patients.

Further plans were made for a larger hospital at the north end of Kiewa Street and a foundation stone was blessed on that site in 1946.

The new Mercy Hospital was opened in 1957 under the leadership of Mother Hugh.

Chelvey stood for some years but was demolished. The Hume Permanent Building Society (now Hume Bank) opened on the site in 1971.