

### **Mrs Vera Bloomfield (nee Bolton)**

Vera Bolton trained as a State Registered Nurse at Southmeads in Bristol, having been born and educated in Bath. Just before her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday she contracted rheumatic fever which left her with a damaged heart. On her doctor's recommendation that she should move to a dryer area she came to Brooke Street in Ipswich to do her midwifery training. Having successfully completed the course, she had to work in East Suffolk for a couple of years.

She then moved to Debenham as District Nurse for the village and seven surrounding parishes. Having spent all her life until then in towns, the country must have come as something of a shock. Her intention had been to move on when she had completed her obligation to the local authority; in fact she stayed for the rest of her life.

As well as delivering many babies and caring for the mothers and elderly people, she had occasion to attend a young man, Russell Bloomfield, who lived and worked in Debenham and had cut his hand. The following Saturday he went into Ipswich as usual and bought a broach for the kind district nurse. Vera continued as District Nurse until they married on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1939 in Debenham church.

Their first home was in Winston, a very small village next to Debenham, where both of their children were born. The second child was a premature baby weighing 3lbs whom she cared for at home with no specialist equipment of any kind. In 1960 they moved back to Debenham into a new bungalow built especially for them and where Russell still lives.

In early 1993, Vera was diagnosed as having multiple myeloma for which she received palliative treatment as an outpatient at Ipswich Hospital. By that time she could no longer look after the home, a role which Russell assumed in addition to caring for her. As her illness progressed she became less and less able to do things for herself and needed help with everything. In spite of being on painkillers, and with mobility severely impaired, she still wanted to stay at home and, thanks to her carers, was able to do so for many months. In September 1994, Vera was admitted to the Ipswich Hospital where she died peacefully three weeks later.

Although Vera loved flowers, she had always said she didn't want flowers at her funeral; she would be given them whilst she could enjoy them. She was extremely proud of being a nurse, remembering the babies she had delivered she is still referred to by some of her friends as "Nurse".

She continued to care for many people in numerous ways throughout her life and was always concerned with their well-being. During the past eighteen months she experienced first-hand some of the difficulties experienced by the disabled and herself suggested "donations for some disabled charity" at her funeral.

When planning the funeral, Vera's immediate family decided on the Special Care Baby Unit at Ipswich because it encompasses babies and disability, and it is also local to Suffolk, so she would have regarded it as a very suitable cause.



Vera and Russell Bloomfield 27<sup>th</sup> May 1990