

BIRTHINGS

A HOMEBIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



Nesting Instincts:

Preparing body, mind and home for birth

Plus all our regular features, birth notices, letters, birth stories, pictures and updates on our community activities.

www.homebirthsydney.org.au

HOME BIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY COMMITTEE* & OFFICE BEARERS

HAS Coordinator* Virginia Maddock
02 9501 0863 | info@homebirthsydney.org.au
Assistant Coordinator Veronica Cerbelli
Treasurer* Veronica Cerbelli sales@homebirthsydney.org.au
Secretary* Amantha McGuinness amanthaeliza@hotmail.com
Memberships Coordinator* Nadine Fragosa
member@homebirthsydney.org.au
Website Jennifer Lorance admin@homebirthsydney.org.au
Fundraising & Events Coordinator Janine O'Brien
janine@ibirth.com.au
Advertising Coordinator Serene Johnson
advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au
Merchandise Coordinator Jenna Richards
047 6197 683 | sales@homebirthsydney.org.au
Birthings Editor Julia Wilson
0468 914 318 | editor@homebirthsydney.org.au
Birthings Assistant Editor Virginia Maddock
Birthings Line Editors Nicola Judd, Lou Williamson
Birthings Designer Bitna Castillo
bitna.castillo@gmail.com
Media Watch Naomi Homel
Distribution Co-ordinator Rebecca Perrin
General Information info@homebirthsydney.org.au

.....
*Offices marked with an asterisk are listed as official committee members in compliance with the responsibilities of running an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 1984.

HONORARY LIFE
& FOUNDING MEMBERS
Maggie Lecky-Thompson
Elaine Odgers Norling

HONORARY
LIFE MEMBERS
Robyn Dempsey
Jo Hunter
Akal Khalsa

The views expressed in this magazine are those of the named contributors only and are not necessarily shared by Homebirth Access Sydney, its Committee or the Editors or Editorial Board of Birthings.

CONTRIBUTIONS, PHOTOS, CORRESPONDENCE Please send to Julia Wilson at editor@homebirthsydney.org.au Photos and written submissions must be emailed. Prior notice to the Editor of your intention to submit work is appreciated.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Summer 2015 No. 128 | November 2015
Autumn 2016 No. 129 | February 2016
Winter 2015 No. 130 | May 2016
Spring 2016 No.131 | August 2016

BACK ISSUES Back issues of Birthings are like hens' teeth! But we will try to accommodate requests. Back issues cost \$7.00 per issue. Postage is \$3.00 per single copy. A price for multiple copies can be arranged. The magazine is very valuable in that it contains many birth stories and information, plus gives an insight into the homebirth movement and HAS activities.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify any change of address to HAS, PO or by email to the Memberships Coordinator at: member@homebirthsydney.org.au

CONTRIBUTING TO BIRTHINGS

.....
The strength of Birthings is all the thought provoking, inspiring and challenging writing from members of our community. To ensure that the magazine is balanced, responsive to our audience's interests and needs, and reflects the

priorities of HAS, we have developed by the HAS executive, to reflect the range of people in our community. The editorial board members are Maggie Lecky-Thompson, Adrienne Abulhawa, Jo Hunter and Virginia Maddock. The role of the editorial board is outlined in the guidelines below.

CONTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

.....
Here are some guidelines for how to write your story, and what happens once you have submitted it for our consideration.

WHAT TO SUBMIT Submissions are sought on the theme of the issue as stated on the back cover of the previous issue. Your response to the theme may be in a range of formats: poetry, opinion, artistic, personal or factual. We also welcome birth stories from members. Your birth story is a special part of your family's journey and the story of homebirth in Sydney. It is also a great gift to share with other parents, especially those preparing for the birth of their own babies.

Other submissions apart from those outlined above are also very welcome, though we may not always be able to publish them, as we often receive more submissions than we have space to print. We will get back to you as soon as possible with a response and discuss the possibilities. If you have an idea for a submission that you would like to discuss before writing fully, please feel free to send us an email with an outline. We love a good idea!

STYLE Your submission should be written in your own style. You do not need to be a professional writer or have a poetic style to give a moving and interesting account of your own experience. Your submitted writing should be all your own work – you must not borrow or copy words written by someone else, unless they are attributed quotes of a reasonable length.

LENGTH Please write your story in the amount of words you think you need. Submissions should be under 1800 words. We may edit for length and style and so may cut your story to ensure it is appropriate for use in BIRTHINGS.

EDITING Your story will be checked by our team of editors. The intention is to retain your voice, while ensuring that grammar, spelling and other style issues are correct and of a high quality. Your story may also be cut for length (see above).

Your story may not defame any person. If the editorial team is concerned that an issue of defamation may exist, we may decline to publish your work or require the defamatory material to be removed prior to publication.

If any major editing is recommended by our editors, we will contact you for permission and return a copy of the edited material for your approval. If our standard editing procedure is applied, we will not send it for your approval.

PICTURES We encourage you to submit some high-resolution digital images with your story, especially with birth stories. Please no more than 6-8 photos per story, otherwise they will lose impact due to reduction of size to fit them in.

TERMS OF USE Please note that by submitting your story to Birthings you warrant that the content is not confidential and that you have the right to offer it for publication. You also agree that you grant Birthings the copyright permission for the purposes of publication in this magazine and on the Homebirth Access Sydney website.

EDITORIAL BOARD All stories will be put before the editorial board before publication. The board's duties include:

- Reviewing copy to ensure it reflects the priorities of HAS and the interests and needs of its members and the community,
- Supporting the editors to make editorial decisions,
- Providing a guide for the future direction of the magazine.

PROCEDURES Please provide your story as a Microsoft Word or equivalent document attached to an email and send to Julia Wilson at : editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

You will be notified immediately of receipt and contacted before publication. There is often more material than we can publish submitted for each issue of Birthings. If your story cannot be published due to space limitations we will contact you. In some cases we will ask your permission to hold a story over for a future issue.

Thank you so much for considering a contribution to Birthings. Your experiences and insights are what makes the magazine so rich and interesting, and such a valuable resource for the homebirth community.

BIRTHINGS



Homebirth Access Sydney

www.homebirthsydney.org.au

REGULARS

- EDITORIAL JULIA WILSON 4
- Committee Member Profile 5
- Coordinator's Report VIRGINIA MADDOCK 6
- Birth Announcements 8

- Merchandise 32
- HAS In The Community 34
- VIRGINIA MADDOCK / JERUSHA SUTTON

- Cartoon AMY BELL 48
- Pre-Natal Services 50
- Doula & Placenta Services 51
- Birthing Services: Midwives 52
- Guide To Choosing A Midwife 53
- Homebirth Support Groups 54

FEATURES 'Nesting Instincts'

- 10 Centring Down JULIA WILSON
- 14 Creating Your Babymoon Nest SAMMI CAMBRAY
- 16 Blessingway KELLY WINDER
- 20 Meditation for Peaceful Pregnancy and Birth JANE HARWICKE COLLINGS
- 23 Instinctive Nesting FREYA KNIGHT
- 24 Nesting BRITT VIKSTRAND-RICHARDS
- 26 St George Homebirth Service Rally DR CHRISTINE CATLING
- 28 Pregnancy Preparedness MOLLY ENGLAND
- 30 Birth Affirmations BITNA CASTILLO

BIRTH STORIES

- 37 The Circle of Life BRITT VIKSTRAND-RICHARDS
- 38 Karen's Birth of Samuel KAREN ROBERTS
- 42 Lindy's Birth Of Tara LINDY DAVIES
- 44 Sammi's Birth of Jaiya SAMMI CAMBRAY

FRONT COVER



Photo of Freya
by Victoria Rowland

BACK COVER



Belly by Raquel Grant
Photo by Virginia Maddock
@ Natural Beginnings

Editorial



Welcome to our Spring issue, Nesting Instinct. First and foremost, I would like to thank the Committee for welcoming me on board. In particular, I would like to heartily thank Virginia Maddock for her ongoing support both of this magazine and in particular, my transition to editor. I have also been working closely with Bitna Castillo and cannot believe her patience and dedication to her new role as Designer of Birthings. I could not have got this baby into your hands

without their love and support. The entire team has been so kind and has welcomed me with open arms. I feel truly held.

I am so thrilled to be on board in my new role as Editor for such a juicy and nourishing theme, so close to my heart. What an issue to start my journey as Editor. Serendipitous and in perfect timing as birthings always are! The nesting instinct stirs in our spirit around this time of year as Spring blossoms and bursts forth, calling us to centre down, take stock, cleanse our spirits, our homes and our hearts, creating a sacred space fit for inviting new life. A time of enormous transformation requires a quiet mind and awakened spirit and our nesting phase provides a living meditation to quieten the mind and listen to our intuition. This issue provides you with all you need to get nesty and prepare for birth. Nestle in with your brood and a cuppa and enjoy this wonderful issue.

Julia Wilson

HAS would like to thank the following new and renewed Members for their support:

Allison Sharf
Allyson Groth
Amanda Langdon
Amelia Seymour
Amy Gule
Amy Tucker
Ana Crnkovic
Ange Milthorpe
Anja Weinhold
Cait Griffin
Catherine Kerle
Charlotte Gaborit
Chris Rowe
Chrissy Grainger
Christine Zimmermann
Claire Johnston Hall
Danielle Carey
Denise Gouvea
Elizabeth Moutou
Evanee Lee
Holly Zwalf
Iman Dhedhi
Jacquie Harsh
Jahmacah Duncan Dean

Jane McDermott
Janna Mizens
Jessica Blancato
Jessica Erntner
Kristall Wong
Kristie Ussher
Lara Oreshkin
Laura Gauslaa
Lily Broz
Lisa Scotcher
Lorraine Kleier
Louise Harvey
Lucy Herron
Matilda Michell
Michal Lisa Capo
Miriam Hart
Monique Cooper
Nagisa Hiraoka
Nicole Jago
Noriko Amies
Paige Dreha
Rachel Gunn
Sandy Ghobrial
Sarah Mountajed
Tara Grezcek

Membership

For new membership or renewals please
go to
www.homebirthsydney.org.au
and click on 'membership'

Committee Member Profile

When did you join HAS?

I have written for Birthings in the past and I jumped in as editor this month when I read that there was a need for a new editor. I resonate strongly with the ethos of HAS and our missions are in alignment.

Who is in your family?

I have five children. Sienna, (21) Jayden (18) Briar, (17) Bailey, (13) and Miabella, (10) Three of my children were born at home.

What did you do before children?

I grew up on the Northern Beaches of Sydney. I spent a lot of time at the beach and the snow.

What have you done since children?

Lots! I have been largely involved in childbirth and homebirth activism, both in the media and at a grass roots level. I have also supported families in birth over nearly 20 years and I wrote a book called Blissful Birth and some Blissful Birth programmes. I also founded a Homebirth Cause and sister group on facebook called I bet I can find one million babies born safe and sound at home. So much more to share. Basically I have dedicated my life to changing perceptions about childbirth.

Why Homebirth?

Homebirth is not only the reminiscence of our past and our innate nature, it is also the way of the future.



Julia Wilson
Birthings Editor

What is the most amazing thing you have seen, learned about or learned from Homebirth?

So many amazing and wonderful things. Transformation springs to mind. The most amazing, perhaps is the connection and support of the homebirth community locally and internationally. The bond created by our experience with homebirth and our commitment to the cause connects us as individuals from so many walks of life and yet we feel togetherness. It is like a home. A haven. A house of belonging. A safe space where we come together in support of one another and homebirth itself. I feel blessed that homebirth has graced my life in so many ways, on so many levels.

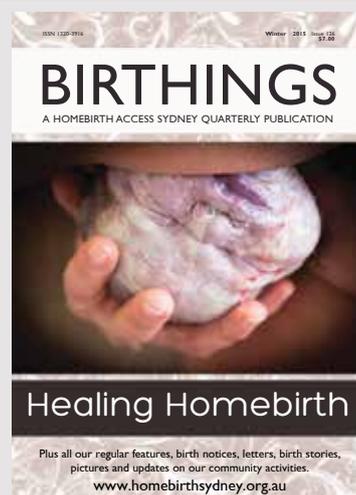
Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor

To encourage readers to write in, we now have a prize each issue for the best letter.

The prize for this issue is:
1 year subscription to the Birthings Magazine!

Please send us a letter for next issue so we can print it here! Send your letters to:
editor@homebirthsydney.org.au



Coordinator's Report

Since the last report saying that our committee has been stagnant, we have had some changes and updates to the line-up. Firstly a very big welcome to our new editor, Julia Wilson who was a last minute change from Jodi who couldn't take it on after all. Julia comes with a wealth of knowledge and experience in the birth world and I am so excited and honoured to have her at the Birthings helm. She even arranged for this gorgeous photo to be taken for the front cover. Isn't it divine? To find out more about Julia, see our Committee Member Profile on page seven.



Veronica Cerbelli has stepped down as Merchandise Coordinator, but has retained her role as Treasurer and volunteered for the Assistant Coordinator role while continuing to work behind the scenes on our new website – it is taking some time due to the voluntary nature of the work which must fit in around family and other business, but we cannot wait to launch it when it is ready as it will look better, function much more seamlessly and have added features and listings which our current website severely lacks.

Our new Merchandise Co-ordinator is the lovely Jenna Richards who is only new to Australia from Canada and has a passion for birth and breastfeeding which is truly infectious! You will find out more about her when she is our Committee Member Profile star next issue. In late May I attended the Homebirth Australia conference in Melbourne, along with fellow committee members Amantha McGuinness, Nadine Fragosa, Rebecca Perrin and past Birthings editor Jacqueline Cooke who all helped out with womaning our merchandise table. Having dry socket from a molar extraction earlier that week, as well as bronchitis and laryngitis, it was pretty difficult to concentrate with my coughing and being dosed up on pain killers, (as well as herbs and copious amounts of vitamin C,) so I have left the review for Nadine to write up which you will find on the HAS In The Community page.

Last week I was invited to represent consumers at the Australian College of Midwives Midwifery Practice Scheme consultations in Sydney. Queensland Health awarded a contract to the Australian College of Midwives (ACM) to develop a Midwifery Practice Scheme (MPS) which will provide a framework of processes, policies and guidelines to support the continual development of midwives and meet insurers' requirements around professional indemnity insurance for PPMs.

It is hoped that this work will provide a model or a framework for other states and territories for the future. This means that the MPS may be suitable for implementation as a national scheme covering all midwives in private practice, if agreed nationally. As the exemption for PPMs to hold professional indemnity insurance expires on December 31, 2016 and it has been stated that no more exemptions will be given, the MPS is an important step for the future of homebirth in Australia and a vital one to get right.

Along with about 15 other mostly midwives, we combed through the 'Planned birth at home midwifery practice standards', and the 'Transfer from planned birth at home guidelines' to get the wording exactly right so that midwives are protected in supporting women's rights to birth at home. We eagerly await the release of the MPS and hope that our ideas were taken on board and that any insurance product that is forthcoming, is flexible enough to meet the requirements of home birthing women, in whatever circumstances they may find themselves!

In the last week of October it is Homebirth Awareness Week. And to celebrate we are hosting 2 exciting events...

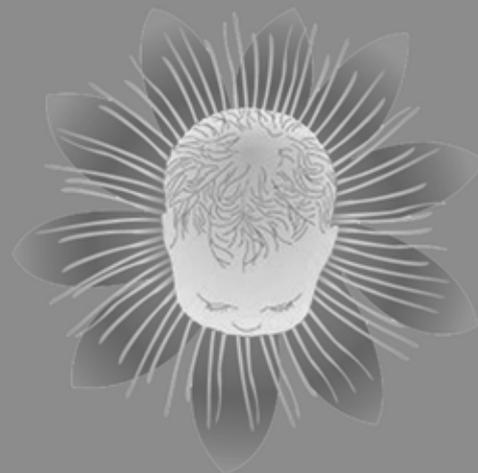
The Homebirth Dads Night Out is on the evening of Sunday 25th October at PJs Irish Hotel in Parramatta – nice and central for those travelling from any direction in Sydney! It will be hosted by myself and Gary Caganoff who attended the last one as a guest, and will again have our Events & Fundraising Coordinator and midwife Janine O'Brien, and fellow midwife Jo Hunter to answer any questions.

Our last HBDNO was a really enjoyable night and we hope even more dads can make the next one. Thanks again to our recurrent sponsors: Hills Spinal Health chiropractic, OzBaby Trends and Sam Saidi.

If any other businesses would like to co-sponsor this event, please contact Janine: Janine@ibirth.com.au

And on Wednesday October 28 at 10:30am will be our Homebirth Access Sydney Annual Picnic at Petersham Park – look for the HAS banner! Hope to see you there with your pregnant bellies or babies and kids – the more the merrier, particularly if we can get some media there to raise positive awareness for homebirth. We will be selling raffle tickets and some merchandise to raise funds so bring some cash on the day! See our ads on page 49 for more details...

Virginia Maddock



Natural Beginnings

"Holistic Health, Doula and Placenta Services"

Herbal Medicine

Nutrition

Flower Essences

Birth Support Doula

Placenta Encapsulation

Birth & Family Photography

*Natural Fertility, Pregnancy,
Birth, Postnatal & Children's Health*

Virginia Maddock

ADWHM, DN, ACI, RC3, DC

9501 0863

0415 683 074

5 Balfour Ave Caringbah NSW 2229

virginia@naturalbeginnings.com.au

www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

My HOMEBIRTH a personal HISTORY
By Elaine Norling
Melbourne presentation
given at the 30 Homebirth Australia
Conference 'Icons of Homebirth- Pearls of
Wisdom' is now available...
[Google \[hbirth.tumblr.com\]\(http://hbirth.tumblr.com\)](http://Google.hbirth.tumblr.com)



Birth Announcements



Odin Vilmos Douglas Platthy, born at home in the water under the stars at 10.50pm **23rd September 2014!** Thankyou to the infinite support we received throughout this pregnancy and birthing journey from our family, friends, community and the spirit that moves through all life! We are blessed to have our divine son/ brother in our arms and look forward to the journey to come with him growing by our side!



Welcome beautiful **Toby Alan Rowe**, born 7:30am **16th June 2015**. Thank you to Tanya for all your dedication, care and support and to Sheryl and Jo for stepping in when needed to bring gorgeous Toby into our arms. We are forever grateful for his natural, intervention free birth.



Welcome **Zion Star**, born at home in Crystal Waters on **28th July, 2015**. His birth was amazing. Mama, Beau was surrounded by seven women and his father and a close brother were outside by the fire.



A magical little soul,
Ahshkii Anekai Lackner
born **27th June, 2015**.

Send your birth announcements
with a photograph to
editor@homebirthsydney.org.au



Welcome precious **Tara**, born peacefully and lovingly at home on the blue moon, **31st July, 2015** to Lindy and Sam. Thanks to all the amazing women that supported our journey. Love!



Lenni Isabella Frederiksen Born at home in the water on a beautiful **sunny Winter's morning at 11:47AM** with her two older brothers Finnius (4) and Bass (2) running around outside with their Nana. Mum was held and nurtured by her loving partner and midwife during labour. Lenni weighed in at 8 pounds 7 ounces, was my biggest baby yet and my easiest and first completely natural birth after one C-section and one assisted vaginal birth! Lenni was also my first daughter and a much loved sister, granddaughter and great-granddaughter.



Welcome **Stella Rae Riggs**, a Miracle gift to Jason Riggs and Skye Welsh. Rockstar Midwife Jo Hunter and birth photographer Jerusha Sutton. Born 9th August 2015. Weight 2900g, 50cm long. Planned **HOME BIRTH** but ended up at Nepean hospital due to late onset pre-eclampsia. Will continue to work & plan towards another **HOME BIRTH**. Miracles do happen. All you need is a little strength, hope, courage and a whole lot of love. "Miracles do happen."

Centring Down

By Julia Wilson

“Emily Dickinson never left her house...Why should she leave? She was reinventing the world. She needed to stay in one place.” ~ Jean Houston

The last six weeks of pregnancy are a crucial time, and how you choose to use the last weeks affect greatly the type of birth you have as well as how you embrace your entry into motherhood. If you haven't had time to really focus within and get grounded in your nest by now, you need to immediately begin the process of centring down. Birthing is a primal, raw, naked reminder of our roots. It strips away all the layers of our persona to reveal only that which is real. It requires letting go of all that you know as yourself and giving over to a force much greater than anything you've before required of yourself. Giving birth is a process that requires you to be extremely grounded and centred. You cannot sink into the mindset you need for birthing if you are still running around, filling your mind with worldly things, running a million errands and generally being out amongst the fast pace of the world today.

The last six weeks demands of you that you SLOW DOWN. Every part of you aches for stillness, rest, self-nurture and to get in touch with what is happening within. In order to be planted firmly in your body, you need to still your mind. For this, you need a clear plate.

Creating a clear space for birth

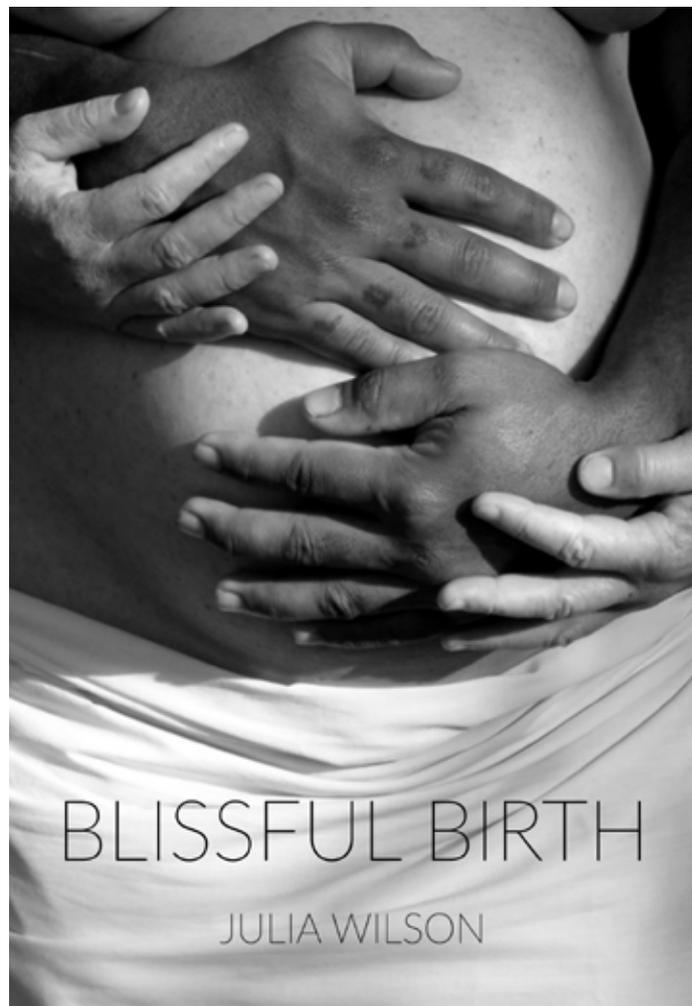
Whereas during pregnancy, the rate of spiritual growth (and therefore challenges associated) comes in a steady trickle and is relatively easy to keep on top of for a reasonably conscious person, the weeks leading up to birth present a torrential downpour and it's easy to feel overwhelmed. The need for support also increases greatly. In the three weeks before due date, I am in very close contact – twice a day by phone plus face to face visits both alone with the woman and also with their partner present. So much can transpire in a day and, without support, a woman can feel it's all too much before labour even begins. Not a good place to come from! Of course individual women vary in their need for support, depending both upon where they are in their spiritual journey and how much support they have available from family and friends.

Birth is an intimate space. It requires being intimate with the people who are allowing me in. It requires truly knowing their needs, their desires, their fears and their hopes.

The goal for the last few weeks is to ensure that there is a readiness for birth as well as openness to it, a lack of fear, an absence of stress, a prime physical condition and an environment of joy, peace and love. I spend as much time as is necessary working towards a connected, clear entry into birth.

- Pre-birth checklist -

- o All errands complete
- o All birth and baby things prepared
- o Connected to partner and children
- o No dramas around
- o Boundaries in place with people where necessary
- o Roles completely clear
- o Parents at peace with their choices for support
- o Post-natal care and meal roster arranged
- o Nest clean and loved
- o Children prepared emotionally
- o Mobile phone in action with credit and charge
- o Petrol in the car
- o Support people connected and in communication



Julia Wilson is the founder of Blissful Birth and the author of Blissful Birth The Handbook.

A mother of five, she is an international advocate for natural childbirth and has been supporting families in pregnancy, birth and the post-natal period for twenty years. Julia is passionate about natural childbirth and views birth and life from a holistic perspective. She also writes on topics regarding pregnancy and birth for magazines and websites such as Natural Parenting, Natural Family, Kindred, Nurture, Birthings and America's Your Natural Baby and More. Julia has been instrumental in popularising the role of the doula in Australia through her work in the media. She is now the Editor of Birthings magazine.

Julia Wilson's Blissful Birth philosophy is a holistic approach from pre-conception to the post-natal period.

The Blissful Birth lifestyle is revolutionary, encompassing nutrition, alternative remedies, ancient midwifery wisdom, homeopathy, affirmations, self-nurture and mindset.

With 20 years experience, Julia Wilson's Blissful Birth has become well respected and is recommended by midwives, doulas and birth parents internationally.

Join the revolution.

- Get the book
- Sign up for a workshop
- Book a private Skype or phone consultation

Email: blissfulbirthinfo@gmail.com

www.blissfulbirth.info



N e s t i n g I n s t i n c t

Photography by Victoria Rowland





Creating Your Babymoon Nest:

Ten Things to Gather for a Mama-Friendly Bedside

By Sammi Cambray



As ripening mothers we put a lot of thought, energy and intention into creating a well-equipped nest for our new babies to land in... What about extending that focus to include the practical and nourishing ways we can attend to ourselves as freshly birthed mamas?

Our culture is well versed in the idea of pre-birth nesting: the frantic, heavily pregnant mama on her hands and knees scrubbing grout with a toothbrush or cleaning out the fridge at midnight. The nesting mama's instinct is to prepare her baby's new environs to safe, equipped and clean.

The needs of the mother in practical terms are vitally important too- amongst all the nappies to be washed, baby items to be collected and so on, a wise mama makes sure her baby moon time will be comfortable, nourishing and well equipped.

The heavily pregnant mama aches for the time ahead- for the immensity and honour of the act of giving birth; but also for the moments of pure joy, love, richness and deep nurturing in the days and weeks post birth. As she gathers her nesting items, hands on her swelling belly and dreaming of those precious days to come, she is actively creating: creating a sweet place for her baby to open up gently to the world, and also, and perhaps on a deeper and even more profound level, a place for her to gently open up too, to her new reality as a mama. A reality where she stands firm in her needs, where she allows space to be nurtured and where all else can fall away

as she stares dreamily into the eyes of her new beloved child.

Here are ten items to have by your bedside in those sweet post-natal days:

1. A soft, warm shawl

A versatile tool in the mama's kit, this can be used to keep you and baby warm if you need to sit up for chilly night-time breastfeeds; you can swaddle your baby in it; or wrap it around yourself to provide a feeling of energetic protection if you are feeling a little overwhelmed. With the right type of shawl, you can also use it as a baby sling, or as a rebozo during pregnancy, labour and postnatally.

2. A big bottle of water

When I had my first baby, I was shocked at how much water I needed to drink, especially overnight! A big (but manageable) bottle by the bed, with a lid that can be removed with one hand, is a must. It can also be great to have some coconut water to help if you are feeling dehydrated or in need of extra nourishment.

3. Extra pillows and cushions

Whilst you are getting the hang of breastfeeding (or breastfeeding a small baby again!) it is useful to have a couple of extra pillows or cushions on hand to help support your back or to help raise the baby, placed under your arms. You may also want to have your feet raised or an extra pillow between your knees if your yoni or pelvic area is sore from birthing.

4. A hot water bottle

This can be used to help relieve after pains; or any discomfort you feel in your shoulders and back as you establish breastfeeding; or any other aches and pains you may be experiencing. Keep it wrapped up in your shawl to keep it hot for longer.

5. A list of Handy Phone Numbers

The early postnatal time can be challenging and you may have a lot of questions that intuition alone may not resolve for you- so have a list of people you can call if you need to reach out. For example, the Australian Breastfeeding Association helpline (1800 6862686); your midwife or doula; a mama whose approach to mothering resonates with you; someone who will be willing to grab a loaf of bread or toilet paper from the shops for you; and so on.

6. Natural Post-birth and Breastfeeding remedies

Being prepared for helping your body and spirit recover from birth is not something you will regret. Creating a little remedy box in advance that you can dip into as needed will help foster a habit of proactively looking after your needs as a mama. As well as more general items such as rescue remedy and arnica, you may want to have some things on hand for more specific things you may need to address:

- a. Yoni healing: For example, witchhazel compresses, frozen pads and herbal mixes for rinsing yoni after wees;
- b. Breastfeeding: For example, pawpaw ointment, organic lanolin. In the weeks before birth ask a herbalist to make up a cream or herbal tincture for mastitis up for you—you may not need it, but if you do, you will be forever grateful for being prepared! Mastitis is horrible and addressing it early helps.
- c. Afterpains- homeopathic arnica and crampbark tincture are both useful.

For more great remedies see “The Down to Earth Birth Book” by Jenny Blyth, or see a naturopath before birth to set up your post-birth remedy kit.

7. Post-Birth Teas

Continuing to drink raspberry leaf tea in the post natal period is traditionally said to help with afterpains, and supports your uterus to return to its pre-pregnancy state, whilst Nettle tea can help with iron levels, especially important if you have experienced a haemorrhage or heavy bleeding post birth. You can use the herbs separately, or seek out a specific, post natal blend.



8. Nourishing, on-hand snacks

Breastfeeding is likely to make you ravenous! Having on hand a variety of snacks that are firstly nutritious, and secondly, can stay on your bedside table until you are ready for them, and can be eaten with one hand, is a winner strategy. Think fruit, nuts, hummus and veggie sticks, healthy slices or biscuits are great for in between meals (which will, if you are being treated like the mama goddess you are, be delivered to you regularly!)

9. Fresh flowers and a broom

Fresh flowers changed daily add brightness and nature to your room, and remind you of the beautiful world waiting outside for you when you and your baby are ready. Collecting new flowers daily is a great activity for an older sibling who yearns to help mama out. The broom is not for you to use! Instead, ask visitors or other family members to give the room a quick sweep- it's amazing how this simple activity can make a room feel so much cleaner and clearer, not just on a physical level but an energetic level as well.

10. A good book

Hours of feeding can become monotonous, so keep your babymoon time enjoyable by having something nourishing to read on hand. You might want to read up on some parenting books or magazines now that you are living those practical day to day issues... or you may crave a little escapism, magic of a story being woven, being picked up and carried away by a fantastic story. Look for something fairly light and positive; a paperback you can hold in one hand; perhaps an old favourite or a book you've been waiting for a special occasion to crack the spine of.



Sammi Cambrey sits in humble awe of the amazing, profound, beautiful and sacred work of the birthing mother- She is deeply inspired, moved, and informed by the path of the mama- the heart opening, creating, wrenching, challenging, deepening, surrendering, trusting, dismantling, wild journey of immensity that it is.

Sammi is a Doula, Birth Counsellor and writer, and runs Mama Rising Holistic Doula Services, and Sacred Whisper Bellingham. She is currently close to birthing her fourth precious child.

Blessingway

By Kelly Winder



Photo by Jacob Johnson

Like most women, you probably already know what a baby shower is. Chances are you have either attended one or had one planned for you in the weeks leading up to an impending birth. However, there is a beautiful pre-birth tradition which is becoming more popular as word spreads. It's called a blessingway, which is also known as a Mother Blessing.

A blessingway is an old Navajo (native American) ceremony, which celebrates a woman's rite of passage into motherhood.

The westernised version of this is the 'Mother Blessing' which is the term I will use out of respect of the Navajo tradition, especially having read that the Navajo people don't approve of the name being used this way (I have used it in the title as it is more widely known as a blessingway). Unlike a traditional baby shower, where gifts are purchased for the baby, a Mother Blessing is all about nurturing the mother-to-be and celebrating motherhood.

As with most special events in modern society, baby showers have become very commercialised. If you were to ask someone to describe what happens at a baby shower, the answer would probably be along the lines of, 'where women get together and give gifts for the baby'. There is also so much focus on the new arrival and excitement of meeting the baby, and very little focusing on the mother.

A Mother Blessing is all about nurturing the mother, and filling her cup so it overflows with love and confidence as she awaits the impending birth of her baby. A woman who is given lots of love has more love to give in return — and there is nothing like a circle of loving women to get that delicious hormone, oxytocin, (the hormone of love and bonding) flowing!

A Mother Blessing is a beautiful and unique way to honour a mother-to-be, spending time with her, sharing stories, debriefing fears and to instill confidence and strength.

What Happens at a Mother Blessing?

A Mother Blessing involves a gathering of the mother-to-be's most trusted friends and family, who sit in the power of a circle and share amongst one another. Traditionally it is a woman-only gathering and may include her mother, sisters, aunts, daughters, best of friends, mentors — anyone she respects, looks up to or values.

A Mother Blessing helps the woman to prepare herself for the birth, emotionally, spiritually and mentally, for the all important role of a new mother. She feels 'held' and supported by those she loves and respects — a great way to help her release any blockages she may be feeling and to allow her to embrace what's to come.

Hearing other women's birth stories as you share around the circle can be surprising, exciting and heartwarming to hear. A Mother Blessing can be very affirming, empowering and uplifting.

It doesn't matter what religion (if any) the mother is — a Mother Blessing honours all belief systems.

Guests can bring a plate of food to share (to follow in the theme of sharing), although you may like to provide all the food yourself if you are planning one. But don't forget to include it on the invite if you wish for them to bring a plate to share.

Mother Blessings will vary in proceedings and rituals, there is no set order or agenda, so you can choose what you would like to do. Since I have not attended a Mother Blessing myself, I decided to ask some women who have had one planned for them, as well as those who have planned Mother Blessings for others, to find out what they and the other guests enjoyed the most.

What is it Like to Have a Mother Blessing?

Kym had a Mother Blessing organised for her by her best friend, who was also her Doula.

“It was a beautiful afternoon and really helped me face some issues i had about the birth. During the afternoon [after the Mother Blessing], my two daughters brushed my hair and placed flowers in that guests had brought. My doula made a bracelet for baby out of beads that each guest bought and they also bought me a candle each that I lit during labour. I had my feet bathed and massaged. We discussed our hopes and dreams for our family and we prayed about my concerns for the birth. I had been skeptical about the event but it was so inspiring, and put all the family into such a positive place for the labour and birth. It also gave me the confidence to have a lotus birth, which I felt this daughter was asking for.”

Georgia says her Mother Blessing was wonderful:

“All my mama friends brought me a bead and said a little blessing for me and my upcoming labour. I made a bracelet from these which I wore while I was in labour (you can see it in her birth film here). Everyone told me their experiences from their births (my nana surprised me by telling me she’d had 4 vbacs [vaginal birth after caesarean] in the 1950’s!), then while everyone chatted, we all worked on a square for a quilt for my son. He now has a quilt sewn by all these amazing women who supported me. It was really beautiful!”

Some Ideas for Planning a Mother Blessing
Helen, who has been involved in four Mother Blessings and has helped to plan others, found that the activities that everyone seem to enjoy the most include:

I. Bead Ceremony

This is a nice way to get everyone — not just those who can actually make it to the event — involved in supporting the mother-to-be. In one case I managed to get hold of the email addresses of a friend who had friends and family scattered all over Australia and the world. Most of them sent in a bead and a note, which meant so much to the mother as she read them. It



Photo by Jacob Johnson

gives a really nice feeling for the mother-to-be to feel that she's surrounded by so much love from those around her, with a physical reminder of their presence to have with them at their birth. These beads can then be made into a necklace for the mother-to-be to wear during labour, as per below:

2. Cord Ceremony

Binding everyone's wrists with a single cord of red wool or some other yarn. Everyone then keeps the string around their wrists until they hear that birth is underway, then they all cut the cord as a symbol of unity. Plus, the cord is a nice way to remind others to be thinking of the prospective mother.

3. Flowers and/or Henna

A crown of flowers made for the mother always makes her feel special, and henna [body art, typically on the belly and/or hands] (if you can get someone who does it) is always good fun for the mother and other guests. There are loads of traditions associated with "mother" henna.

4. Massage

Always bliss for a pregnant mama. Head, shoulder, hand and foot massage (maybe not hand if she's getting henna done!) needs no explanation. All these things are done to make the mother feel nurtured, protected, surrounded by love, and supported.

Something else to mention that isn't so much a blessingway tradition but is a popular idea to incorporate: the meal roster! If you can have everyone commit to a meal or two, it can be such a wonderful gesture. The idea is to try to cover at least two weeks, where the new parents won't have to worry about at least one meal of the day!

Bella threw a Mother Blessing for her sister for her last pregnancy.

"We all brought a meal to put in her freezer and a bead for her to make into a necklace (actually she made it into a mobile that she attached to her birth pool). We all gathered at one point and as we gave her our bead we told her why we had picked what we had for her. Then we held onto a ball of red yarn and threw it back and forth around a circle to each other and as we threw the yarn we said to the mother what we wanted for her, for her birth. Before we let go of the yarn we wrapped it once around our wrists. At the end we cut the yarn around our wrists and threaded onto it a small red bead my sister gave us and tied them on our wrists. We kept our bracelets on until after the birth. After that we gave her a foot and hand rub and shoulder massage. We also painted her belly with henna. It was gorgeous!"



Photo by Jacob Johnson



Photo by Sandy Bucknell

• Bellydancing! Contrary to what most of us may understandably assume “ bellydancing was originally done by women, for women. It is a beautifully feminine art and perfect for your Mother Blessing.

• A plaster belly cast is a fun idea for a Mother Blessing which is also a great keepsake. It can be messy, but guests and the mother-to-be will probably enjoy it even more!

• Mothering the mother “ brushing her hair, washing her feet in warm water (essential oils are a nice touch “ but first check they are safe for late pregnancy) or painting her toenails is a lovely way to nurture her.
What Next?

If you'd like a Mother Blessing, or for someone to plan one for you, then there is plenty of information online. You can share this article with your friends and family and search for other information. If you're not confident doing it on your own, some women have started businesses to run them for you, some of them are also doulas. A Mother Blessing can be a completely healing and loving time for a mother-to-be, at a time when we need to nurture our mothers more than ever. Enjoy and spread the word!

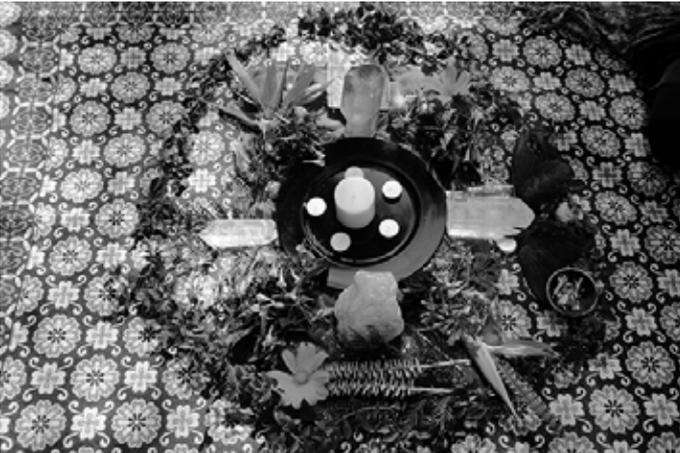


Photo by Jacob Johnson

Gabrielle has attended several Mother Blessings.

“Some beautiful experiences I've shared at blessingways are the sharing of birth stories around the circle, positive stories of the journey of the women in the circle, as well as crafting blanket patchwork pieces for the mother to use with her new baby, singing sacred circle songs, meditations, bellydancing. Another thing women can do is introduce themselves with their maternal line of ancestors, for example, I am Gabrielle, daughter of Catherine, granddaughter of Patricia, great granddaughter of etc, etc. It's a nice way to honour those women who have gone before us.”

More Mother Blessing Ideas

• You can search on the internet for more ideas, but here are some extras to get you started: Some women make an agreement to the mother at Mother Blessings to light a candle (even say a prayer as well) in the mother's honour, as soon as they hear that labour has begun.

• Traditionally, a blessing is done in the form of a prayer or poem. It's a lovely idea for the guests to bring a poem or prayer they have found or personally written, to share with the mother-to-be. Someone could be in charge of collecting the blessings and collating them in a book/journal/scrapbook or other special place.



Kelly Winder is the creator of BellyBelly.com.au, a doula, writer and mother to three awesome children. Currently, she's travelling the world for 12 months with her partner and children, and hopes to inspire more families to do the same. Visit [aroundtheworld- pluskids.com.au](http://aroundtheworld-pluskids.com.au) for more information

Meditation for Peaceful Pregnancy and Birth

By Jane Harwicke Collings



*H*ow does mama prepare to maintain her inner strength and serenity during labor and birth? According to Australian midwife Jane Hardwicke Collings, meditation can be a key to her success. In this abridged version of her article *Meditation During Pregnancy*, Jane shares the benefits of meditation as well as tips for how to get started. Study Abroad in Bali with Birth Institute to be immersed in a culture that embraces meditation as part of daily life.

Pregnancy is a time when a woman is more naturally in touch with her body and her inner self. Introducing a meditation practise can enhance the experience by creating a “way in” to her mind’s inner sanctum. She can then see deeper than her mind’s chatter and fears, and connect with her calm inner core. Once she has established that connection, she can return to that place as desired or as necessary.

During labour, when women are acting intuitively and free of fear, they often choose to withdraw and focus internally, finding their calm inner mind space. The hormones flowing in her blood stream support, enhance and co-create this experience. If a labouring woman in this harmonious natural state is disturbed by others or disturbed by fear, her hormones change, she loses her focus, her labour may be prolonged and/or more painful, and her baby may be jeopardised.

Using meditation as a tool, she can again access the peaceful mind space that supports and is necessary for natural labour, and improve her experience and the outcome of her labour and birth, making it safer for her baby and herself. A woman can actually choose to create a state of consciousness that is associated with a quicker and less painful labour and birth. When a woman in labour is undisturbed, she focuses internally and has reduced beta waves (to learn more about brain waves, read Jane’s full article *Meditation During Pregnancy*). If she is disturbed by people asking lots of questions, or by her own thoughts and fears, then her beta waves will increase, and the hormones in her body will change. She will be on alert, and will experience an increase in adrenaline. Adrenaline inhibits oxytocin, and therefore slows down labour.

To best facilitate the natural process of birth, the labouring woman needs to feel safe, and have her physical and emotional needs met. Once in this situation, she can relax her mind as per meditation, be in an aroused or relaxed body state, and access deep levels of consciousness. She can then connect with her innate body wisdom and give birth in a blissful painless state of complete awareness – the evolved mind state. This is the biologically intended space from which to give birth.

All that is required to access this state is a method of creating alpha waves such as:

- focus on the breath
- making constant deep sounds (toning)
- staying physically and mentally relaxed (letting go of body tension and thoughts or fears)
- reduced mental and sensory stimulation – a darkened environment, being in water and undisturbed

Women who meditate in pregnancy and birth have reported easier birthing experiences, often painless and often ecstatic. It seems that when birth is approached from a place of trust, it can unfold in its natural way and be a positive initiation into motherhood. If this is possible for some women it is possible for all.

What is Meditation?

Meditation is the act of observing the mind; the practise of training the mind and a technique to master the mind. Observing the mind separates ourselves from our thoughts, allows us to notice that we are not our thoughts, we just think them. Training the mind to let go of thoughts or detach from them, to stop thinking, provides us with access to a clear mindspace. Practising this technique regularly, improves our ability to do it. Some of the benefits of regular meditation include:

- Lowering of blood pressure
- Slowing of pulse rate
- Improvement in circulation
- Deeper, slower breathing
- Reduction of harmful lactic acid in body
- Stress and tension levels dramatically reduced
- Improvement in length and quality of sleep, also easier to get to sleep
- Improvement in concentration
- Increase in perceptiveness
- Reduction in tendency toward addiction (to food, alcohol, drugs tobacco)

- Improvement in memory
- Increased sense of general wellbeing
- Reduction of the hormone cortisol which is known to induce stress

How to Meditate

There are various ways to meditate and many books written on the subject. It is up to you to find the way that works best for you. Here's a simple method:

- Put yourself in a quiet place where you will not be disturbed, without a full stomach, be warm, out of drafts and comfortably seated with a straight back.
- Close your eyes, relax your tongue and the whole of your body.
- Bring your awareness to your breathing, notice and count the duration of your inhalation and then your exhalation.
- Slow them down to 3 or more seconds each, breath deeply into the base of your lungs, you may notice your abdomen rise and fall with each breath.
- The desire at this stage is to achieve single pointed focus (to induce alpha waves), you can do this by counting your breaths, count to ten and then start again, or by visualising yourself in a safe place in nature.
- When thoughts enter your mind, don't engage with them. Simply witness them and let them pass.
- See your mind as if the ocean, these thoughts will come drifting past you like a message in a bottle floating on the surface of the water, simply put – don't open the bottle and it will float away.
- Continue counting your breaths, you may enter a state where images appear and you lose awareness of your limbs, this indicates theta waves.
- When you find your quiet inner mind, you can simply stay there, watching what happens, or introduce a question for contemplation.
- At the appropriate time (you will know when that is) slowly bring your awareness back to your breath and your body.
- Wiggle you fingers and toes and slowly stretch your whole body.

- Take some deep and quicker breaths and notice how it feels to be awake compared to where you were. This will assist you in knowing the difference between these states and help you know where you are in the process of meditation.

- Following this wake up phase, in order that you remember insights or content from your meditation, it is important to put them into thought form.

“The best way to do this is through words. Writing or speaking about the experience immediately after you have completed it will draw the contents up into your beta mind so that you can retain them consciously.”

~ Anna Wise

Have your journal nearby and jot down key words from your experience to be added to. Draw or describe pictures or feelings.

Using Meditation to Prepare for Birth

In a state of increased theta waves, you may encounter relevant issues in need of attention, such as an unanswered question you have, a fear, or outmoded belief you hold that needs review. These are the gifts of meditation and the opportunities you give yourself for refinement of yourself, and prepare for birth on the subconscious level. The uncovering of these sorts of things, one of the most important reasons for meditating in pregnancy, will happen more often if you ask for them.

Use your meditation to set an intention, eg. During this meditation I give thanks for my noticing any blocks I may have to... You can also be quite specific in what you go looking for, eg. Imagine a particular scene or your ideal birth scenario. Who is there? What time of day is it? You can also detect blocks you have in your subconscious mind (because that's where you are visiting) that may influence your experience.

You may also visualise – by imagining – your desired outcome. Notice what happens when you do this and then apply your conscious mind to it after meditation. Return again to that image next time with any changes you make to your ideas about yourself or the situation. Creative visualisation, imagining the whole scene how you want it to be, is a useful tool to use during meditation in preparation for birth.

Guided meditation, trance work and hypnosis are other techniques that can be used to create and access deeper levels of consciousness. As with meditation these practises can be done for the personal physical and psychological effects, and for purpose of praying and any activity can become a meditation and often does for

for those who bring what they learn from meditation into their daily lives. Basically it is about being focused, not distracted, having the clear intention to trust in yourself, letting go of fears, flowing with whatever comes next, and being fully present in the moment. A great way to approach birth!

Jane Harwicke Collings is an independent midwife from Australia, who has been attending homebirths since 1984. She is herself a homebirth mother of four, a grandmother and a teacher of the Women's Mysteries. She gives workshops, writes books and has founded The School of Shamanic Midwifery. Jane has trained in Shamanic practices with James M Harvey, aka Blackbear and has had many wonderful teachers including Midwife Maggie Lecky Thompson, Birthkeeper Jeannine Parvati Baker and Teacher and Author Cedar Barstow. Jane lives in the country of NSW with her husband, some of her children and many animal friends. As Jane says, she's working for the Goddess.

Instinctive Nesting

By Freya Knight

Nesting seems to be an instinctive, hormonally induced, urge that cuts across cultures and creatures. How and when a woman builds her nest is very individual and rarely does it fit into the plans of the rest of the family. Like male Ring Doves, who follow the lead of their female partners when building their nest, the woman's family would be wise to support her nesting instincts. Some women feel the need to clean and order their surroundings while others fulfill this urge by surrounding themselves with precious things. The Osprey builds her nest to last a lifetime while other birds build a new nest every year. Part of nesting is also becoming discerning about the people you keep company with and preferring only the people you trust in your nesting space. This is why continuity of care is so important as visitors and health professionals may not realize that pregnant and especially laboring women create an internal psychological and emotional space not just a physical space.

I believe that deep down the underlying desire is for basic survival needs to be fulfilled such as shelter, food, water and most of all safety. When her needs are met labor is encouraged to start naturally. Without these the mother may feel that the life of her unborn child is at risk. The birthing process may become more challenging as the woman reacts with fear resulting in the tightening of the body and cervix which can lead to a prolonged and more painful labour or even the need for medical intervention.

With my own birth experience second time around I felt a strong instinctual urge to clean, cook, and stock the pantry for at least a year. I was quite anxious to make sure everything was perfect and in order so that I wouldn't have to do anything at all after the baby was born. I think there were two reasons for my intense need for everything to be done. Firstly my previous birth had ended with an emergency C-section this meant I was almost incapable of doing anything for the first few weeks. I feared that it would happen again so I wanted to be prepared. The second reason I think was that after giving birth all I really wanted to do was to hold my baby, gaze into her eyes and fall deeply in love. Thinking this baby would be overdue like my first, I arranged to spend a week holidaying by the sea around my due date, surrounded by close family.



I was also determined to try for a natural vaginal birth. Taking my nesting instinct with me I let go of all concerns and spent the afternoon in the water and walking along the beach and sure enough early next morning I went into labour. My nesting was complete and I felt safe, supported and ready. Vida Joy was born naturally. Although birthing is an inevitable outcome of pregnancy a positive birth experience can come from preparing a nest, which creates a space in your life for your baby.

From my own birth experiences and from working as a doula and also a student midwife I know that a pregnant woman who feels safe, comfortable and cared for can more easily give her full attention to birthing her child. A sense of safety, comfort and familiarity can be instrumental in having a safe and positive birth experience thus the 'Nesting Instinct' is the body's way of ensuring the survival of mother and baby.

About **Freya**: My name is Freya, I live with my husband and children and extended family on a bush land community. I am a doula, student midwife and owner builder. My passion for all things birth came about through my journey to motherhood. I have two incredible daughters and have had two completely different birth experiences, a Caesarean and a natural Vaginal Birth After Caesarean. My website and facebook page offer information and videos about pregnancy, birth and babies.

<http://bellybirthbond.weebly.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/bellybirthbond>
freya.bbb.doula@gmail.com



Nesting - so much more than a tidy house...

By Britt Vikstrand-Richards



For me it manifested in larger-scale jobs like replacing the external guttering on my weatherboard home, or replacing my veranda.

The nesting instinct, strong in many animal species including us humans, is about creating a comfortable, safe, defensible environment for birthing and raising new young. But it's so much more than getting your home in order; it also helps you to organise – family, support people, your mind and your emotions. Through the process of nesting you are taking control of your environment and creating an optimum place to birth, and in doing so you are empowering yourself and mentally preparing yourself for the birthing process. You are creating the calm and peaceful space that will allow you to focus wholly on yourself and your labour and birth. You are becoming more aware of your space and how you might best use it, and who you might want to have in it.

The beauty of this clean, organised, secure space you are making for yourself is that it creates space in your mind too. Feeling totally secure and comfortable, with minimal distraction, allows you to go inward during labour; to feel totally uninhibited and enter the

'birthing zone'. For me this was a truly spiritual process that allowed me to focus completely on myself, my body and my baby; to find my own inner strength and draw on the strength of all those women that went before me, and the people present in the room with me. I was able to focus and think of my pain as a positive pain as my body ripened and opened, and my baby travelled her journey through my pelvis. The safety of my surroundings meant I was able to let go, to yield to the process and work with the positive energy in the space and within myself.

According to pregnancy books the 'nesting instinct' is an uncontrollable urge to clean, tidy, and organise your home, brought on by the desire to create the perfect 'nest' for your new baby. Some say it comes on strong in the last few weeks of pregnancy when certain hormones like adrenalin are soaring and kicking us into gear. Others apparently experience it much earlier in pregnancy. In my experience it didn't really kick in until the last few weeks, but to be fair, I have a pretty strong aversion to cleaning!

Nesting is very much a mental and spiritual process as well as a physical process. A word of warning though - it is important to remain vigilant during the nesting phase – whilst you may think you are, you are not superhuman. In reality, you are probably eight-and-a-half months pregnant, with a centre of gravity that shifts daily. I speak from experience. Whilst replacing my gutters at eight months pregnant I threw caution to the wind, climbing a ladder without proper support. I experienced five seconds of slo-mo as the ladder slipped and I dropped 1.5m down onto the ladder. A quick trip to the local Emergency Department confirmed no lasting damage. However, the bruising was not only to my ego, my legs and butt were deep purple. Know your limitations!

Your nesting instinct is a pretty powerful tool when harnessed appropriately. Use it to get things done physically, but remember to check in and see what you are achieving internally too – you may be pleasantly surprised!

Through the process of nesting you are taking control of your environment and creating an optimum place to birth, and in doing so you are empowering yourself and mentally preparing yourself for the birthing process. You are creating the calm and peaceful space that will allow you to focus wholly on yourself and your labour and birth. You are becoming more aware of your space and how you might best use it, and who you might want to have in it.

The beauty of this clean, organised, secure space you are making for yourself is that it creates space in your mind too. Feeling totally secure and comfortable, with minimal distraction, allows you to go inward during labour; to feel totally uninhibited and enter the 'birthing zone'. For me this was a truly spiritual process that allowed me to focus completely on myself, my body and my baby; to find my own inner strength and draw on the strength of all those women that went before me, and the people present in the room with me. I was able to focus and think of my pain as a positive pain as my body ripened and opened, and my baby travelled her journey through my pelvis.

The safety of my surroundings meant I was able to let go, to yield to the process and work with the positive energy in the space and within myself.

Nesting is very much a mental and spiritual process as well as a physical process. A word of warning though - it is important to remain vigilant during the nesting phase – whilst you may think you are, you are not superhuman. In reality, you are probably eight-and-a-half months pregnant, with a centre of gravity that shifts daily. I speak from experience. Whilst replacing my gutters at eight months pregnant I threw caution to the wind, climbing a ladder without proper support. I experienced five seconds of slo-mo as the ladder slipped and I dropped 1.5m down onto the ladder. A quick trip to the local Emergency Department confirmed no lasting damage. However, the bruising was not only to my ego, my legs and butt were deep purple. Know your limitations!

Your nesting instinct is a pretty powerful tool when harnessed appropriately. Use it to get things done physically, but remember to check in and see what you are achieving internally too – you may be pleasantly surprised!



Britt Vikstrand-Richards is a home-birthing mum of two, and a student midwife, living on the Mid-North Coast. Growing up in the UK homebirthing was simply 'the way we did it in my family.' Britt hopes to open a Birthing House upon graduation, enabling more women in the area to birth at home, or in a truly supportive, woman-centred, home-like setting.



STOP the St George Hospital Homebirth service closure!



Photo by Allison Cummins

Sadly, the much loved, and hard fought for St George Hospital Homebirth service in Kogarah, Sydney, is being threatened with closure. Reasons are at present unclear, and as yet managers of the service have not given any concrete reasons for this proposal. The dedicated, passionate midwives who work in this service are devastated that it has been threatened with closure – not just because the jobs that they love will disappear, but for the women and families they care for who will no longer have this option of care.

After two years of planning and consultation, the St George Hospital Homebirth service became the first publicly-funded homebirth service in NSW has been operating successfully for ten years. Since then, similar models in NSW have been developed in the Hunter New England Health Service, the Illawarra, Northern NSW and central Sydney (Royal Hospital for Women, Randwick). Existing models have been in operation for a number of years in South Australia (Northern Women's Community Midwifery Program), Northern Territory and Western Australia (Community Midwifery Program).

More recently, services have been developed in Bunbury in Western Australia and Victoria (Casey and Sunshine Hospitals), with services being currently developed in Westmead, Sydney, and Hobart, Tasmania.

As way of background, publicly-funded homebirth programs are hospital-based models that often evolve out of birth centre/caseload midwifery-led models of care. Currently there are 15 publicly-funded homebirth programs around the country and they vary in size from being small services with 2-6 midwives to large practices that employ over twenty midwives.

Women accessing publicly-funded homebirth services are required to be at low risk of obstetric complications. This means that many women who have slight risk factors (defined by each Local Health District and/or Government policy) cannot access this service, and if they wish to have a homebirth, need to seek privately-practising midwives for their care. For those women booked on a publicly-funded homebirth service who have obstetric complications during pregnancy, their midwives continue to care for them in collaboration with obstetricians, and women would plan to give birth in hospital if they remained outside of the criteria for suitability for a homebirth. Similarly, should an intrapartum hospital transfer be necessary, the primary midwife caring for the woman would remain the lead carer when in hospital, providing seamless continuity of carer from home to hospital.

My own research found that women greatly appreciated the continuity of care given by the midwives who work in

these services, and felt that the hospital was available as a 'safety-net'. In 2009, other research into the St George Hospital Homebirth service was very favourable, and nationally, publicly-funded homebirth services were found to have positive maternal and neonatal outcomes, far lower rates of medical intervention than low risk women having hospital births, and high satisfaction rates from women.

Australia needs more choices in childbirth – not less. It is well known that continuity of midwifery-led care is the gold standard of maternity care throughout the world.

To close this wonderful service would be a backward step for maternity care and disadvantage women and families around the St George and Sutherland districts.

Please help us keep this great service open – see what to do on our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stopStGeorgeHomebirthserviceclosure?fref=nf>

Dr Christine Catling is a midwifery academic at the University of Technology Sydney. Her interest in homebirth comes from a few angles: her PhD topic was publicly-funded homebirth, she chairs the National Publicly-funded Homebirth Consortium, and she is a homebirth mother herself.




La Leche League
Supporting your breastfeeding journey

"Our mission is to help mothers to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, education, information, and encouragement and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother."

For more information: www.facebook.com/LLLNBCollary
www.lalecheleague.org.au




• THE SCHOOL OF •
SHAMANIC MIDWIFERY

ONCE UPON A TIME, BUT NOT SO VERY LONG AGO, WHAT WE CALL SHAMANIC MIDWIFERY WAS JUST A WAY OF LIFE.... *A way of life that all women knew inherently from their own birth.*

As babies and children we watched our mothers and the women of our tribe facilitate transformation daily within community life – holding space for each other in Moonlodge, birthing their babies with instinct and knowing, honouring their Elders, attending to their rich spiritual practice and walking a way of wisdom, sovereignty and beauty in their expression of being a Woman.

At our time of Menarche we were honoured and initiated as women and welcomed to join the Motherline, ready to receive into our own hearts, the ancient ancestral women's wisdom of all those who had walked before us. As we lived our lives through Mother, Maga and Crone, the voices of our Ancestors called to us often, whispering wisdoms of Knowing, Truth, Intuition, Psychic ability, Healing prowess and the Midwifery that comes from being a Shamaness who walks between the worlds.

Whilst the time we live in now is different, the women's hearts and bodies we bring to this life are still the same perfect, precious instruments finely tuned to hear and receive the wisdom of our Ancestry as it calls.

*The opportunity to find our way
back to the Motherline is always there.
We are the sacred vessels we have always been.*

FOUR SEASONS JOURNEY

SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

Spring (Nov) 2015 - Spring (Nov) 2016

NORTHERN HEMISPHERE - SUBJECT TO INTEREST

Spring (Feb) 2016 - Spring (Feb) 2017

A year long earth based spiritual experience creating and maintaining a deep connection with the Earth and the Divine Feminine. 4SJ is for all women and focuses on the shamanic perspective of cycles of the Earth, life, the moon, and menstruation, preparing women to be shamanic midwives, practitioners and teachers of the Women's Mysteries, for their community and beyond.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATIONS GO TO
WWW.SCHOOLOFSHAMANICMIDWIFERY.COM

Pregnancy Preparedness

By Molly England



What's Your Parenting Identity?

When couples first discover they are expecting a baby the euphoric feelings quickly turn to practical concerns. Are we financially ready? Will we be good enough parents? What will we do differently from our parents? Pregnancy offers a finite time period to prepare your parenting identity. Weighty morals and values are debated and dinners are spent discussing the baby's taste in music, food and art. Increased responsibilities and trying to juggle priorities are strenuous on new families. Natural childbirth education values partners, moms and babies equally. The family's health and well-being is paramount. Partners are immediately granted the role as mother's coach and together, couples traverse the uncertain terrain from pregnancy to parenthood.

Empowered couples are informed parents that make decisions together. Parenting choices start during pregnancy and having an active partner minimizes fear for everyone. Natural childbirth education classes teach many techniques leading to greater health. The coach supports mom's healthy nutrition by assisting with food shopping and preparation. Coaches are taught how to support moms in their pregnancy exercises. Counter pressure and hip squeeze techniques become second nature. Deep relaxation occurs when the coach describes their repertoire of tranquil scenes: melodic crashing waves, majestic snow covered mountains, floating feathers and other stress-relieving imagery. The coach may need to take on a bouncer-like role, protecting mom from superfluous medical interventions. He may stand at her side ready to deter the overly eager

anesthesiologist. Under the coach's care, powerful contractions must subside before allowing cervical checks, fetal monitoring or any other distractions.

As contractions become more challenging, mom has a well-trained coach supporting her with every subtle twinge. The coach recognizes her furrowed left brow as a sign of imposing pain and reminds her to release the tension. The tuned-in coach rehydrates her dry mouth and dims the lights to create serenity. The coach anticipates mom's needs whether spoken or unspoken.

Parents identifying as a team are confident and fortified to withstand challenges. Babies cry, babies need infinite amounts of attention and they love to be loved. The foundation of a healthy family begins with a strong partnership focused on working together to achieve a healthy pregnancy and labor. Determining parental identity requires evaluating strengths and weakness. Natural childbirth is an endeavor that invites support; turning to the one you love is essential.

Hormones: The Hidden Heroes

Confidently preparing for a healthy pregnancy and labor requires education and knowing your parenting identity. But, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the powerful role that hormones play in pregnancy, labor and postpartum.

During pregnancy, the female body and baby are undergoing immense physiological changes. While mom-to-be is busy baby showering, sipping pregtinis and swimming in a sea of diaper cakes, her body is hard at

work producing the perfect hormonal concoction for her and baby. During pregnancy, emotions can run high, making mom feel like her pregnant body is being held captive on a roller coaster of feelings, sensations and changes. But these hormonal changes are purposeful. Whether the pregnant woman feels hotter than a jalapeño or as irritable as a road rager, the hormones are working their magic, helping the body prepare for labor and delivery.

Dr. Sarah J. Buckley, M.D., is the foremost expert on the subject of pregnancy and hormones. Buckley (2010) writes, "Mother Nature, in her wisdom, prescribes birthing hormones that take us outside our usual state, so that we can be transformed on every level as we enter motherhood." Planning to labor with minimal drugs or medical interventions allows your body to experience the benefits of your hormones because, during labor, these hormones assist in the feel-good sensations of an "ecstatic" birth (Buckley 2010).

Oxytocin, endorphins and prolactin are some of the key players in the hormonal mix. Oxytocin, the "love" hormone, is synthetically reproduced and used in the drug form Pitocin, which, while often administered to stimulate contractions, pales in comparison to its prototype natural oxytocin. Oxytocin not only encourages the uterus to contract, helping the baby move down and out, it benefits the pregnant body by promoting energy conservation, nutrient absorption and de-stressing effects (Buckley 2010). After birth, oxytocin assists the expulsion of breast milk and helps the uterus continue to contract, warding off the potential of hemorrhaging (Odent 1998).

Hormones are also involved in the well-known "fight or flight" sensation, which is an evolutionarily prominent mechanism of survival. For example, if a laboring lion feels threatened, her labor will stall due to increased adrenaline. That same process occurs in humans. In hospital births, under the pressure of policies, procedures, strangers and medical interventions, the laboring body can react to this unnatural environment. Thus, it's no wonder labor may plateau (Buckley 2010).

Creating a secure atmosphere for labor to resume and progress is therefore vitally important. The Bradley Method® teaches couples how to create a safe and private place to labor under any circumstance. Coaches are encouraged to protect the laboring mother and ward off potential disturbances that could disrupt the progress of labor. Informed and knowledgeable couples who can rebuild their sense of security will get their labor back on track. A mother who chooses to avoid drugs, allowing her body to navigate her hormonal map, reaps the benefits of greater awareness and control of her

surroundings. She's better prepared to adapt and advance naturally during labor.

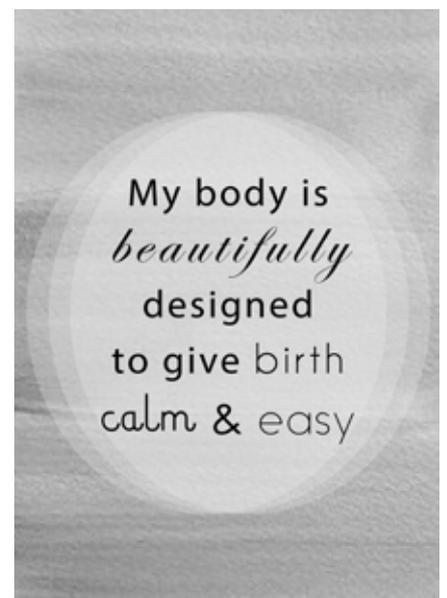
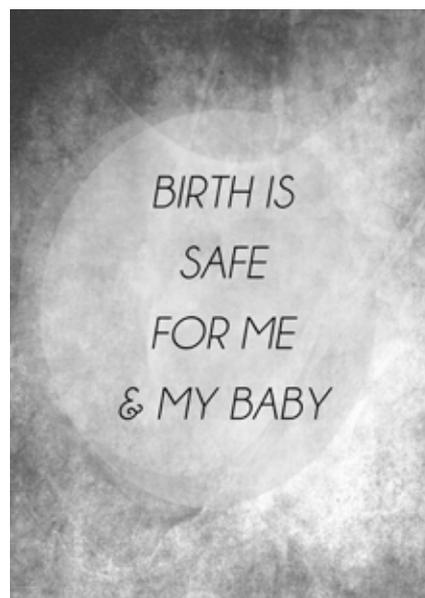
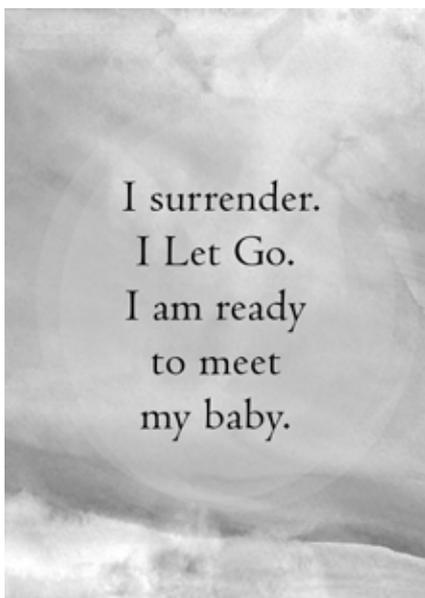
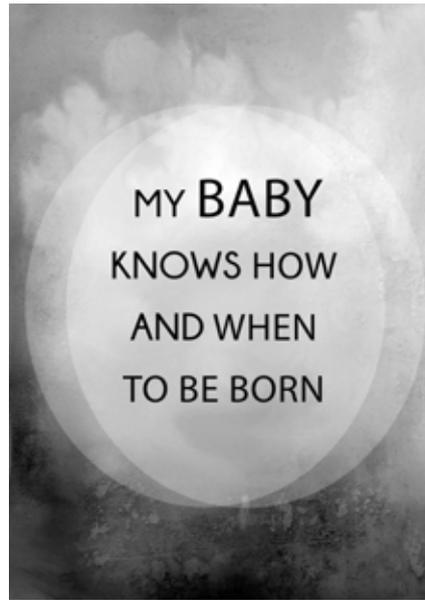
Once baby has made his or her debut, prolactin, the "mothering" hormone, allows mother to nurse with natural effectiveness. After all, labor is an event of grand proportions. Mothers feel exhausted, fatigued, uncomfortable, shaky, uncertain and sensitive. But all of these emotions are minor compared to the immense power of love. The body's natural production of prolactin calms mother and enhances how she perceives her surrounding environment, thereby easing everyone's anxieties and stress (Bradley 2008). Hormones are naturally occurring and given the chance, untainted by synthetic drugs, they encourage pregnant, laboring and breastfeeding mothers to fully embrace the joys of motherhood. Tuning in to your partner and your body during pregnancy prepares families for the most life-changing event - the baby's birth.



Molly England lives in The Woodlands, Texas with her husband and three wonderful children. She is a devoted blogger and a passionate Certified Bradley Method® Natural Childbirth Educator. In 2015 Molly founded Bluebonnet Babies, a virtual hub providing resources based on evidence, research, experience and love to parents making healthy and informed choices. Blogging enables Molly to achieve her goal of empowering families across the globe as they navigate pregnancy to parenthood.

Molly England, Certified Bradley Method® Natural
Childbirth Educator
molly.england@bluebonnetbabies.com
281.895.1263
www.bluebonnetbabies.com
www.facebook.com/bluebonnetbabies
www.twitter.com/bluebonnetbabies
Subscribe to our blog here
"Pregnancy to Parenthood Simplified"

♡ Birth Affirmations ♡



Printable Birth affirmations available
at www.birthingbreeze.com.au



Birth Afloat



Birth Pools & Accessories - Hire & Sales For Home, Hospital or Birth Centre

Birth Afloat has been proudly providing hired Heated Wooden Birth Pools for homebirths for over 20 years and Inflatable Birth Pools for homes, hospitals and birth centres for 6 years. Our kits come complete with the pool, clean fill hoses, a water powered siphon system, pool liners and all the accessories required for a smooth, care free water birth journey. Let us make your water birth journey smooth and stress free.

We've thought of it all, so you don't need to.

Please phone us to discuss your needs or go to our website to see our range of Pool Kits and what is included.



www.birthafloat.com . info@birthafloat.com
02 6684 9222 . 0429 66 88 45



Bountiful Bubs



Bountiful Bubs offer a wide range of ethically sourced, sustainable, natural and organic Bamboo products for baby and Mum.

We have the highest quality, colourful Bamboo Nappies, Nappy Inserts, Nappy Liners, Wipes and wonderful Baby Shower Gifts.

We love bamboo and so will you and your baby. It's soft, antibacterial, extremely absorbent and is ecologically friendly to our planet.

Check out our full range at www.bountifulbubs.com or ring us for a chat.



www.bountifulbubs.com | bountifulbubs@gmail.com | 02 6684 9222 | 0429 66 88 45

Merchandise

Prices are at Recommended Retail Prices. Proceeds return to HAS.

Please order your goods by phone 0476 197 683 or
online at www.homebirthsydney.org.au

T-SHIRTS



**HAS RETRO LOGO
BASEBALL TEE**
White with navy 3/4
sleeves and black logo.
S, M, L, XL
100% cotton
SALE Price: \$20
WAS \$29.95



**HOMEBIRTH MAMA
WOMEN'S T-SHIRT**
White with green print
Sizes 12 – 18
95% brushed cotton & 5%
spandex. Fitted design,
Vneck, short sleeves
002BT Price: \$24.95



**BORN AT HOME
BABY T-SHIRT**
White with purple print
Sizes 00, 0 and 2
100% cotton t-shirt,
round neck, short sleeves
002BT Price: \$16.50



**SUPERFISH
BABY T-SHIRT**
White with blue print
Sizes 00, 0 and 2
100% cotton t-shirt,
round neck, short sleeves
003BT Price: \$16.50



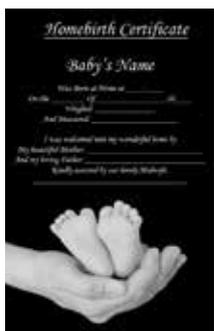
**BORN AT HOME
BABY T-SHIRT**
Purple with white print
Sizes 00, 0 and 2
100% cotton t-shirt,
round neck, short sleeves
001BT Price: \$16.50

Please visit HAS store for stock availability

PRINTS AND GIFTS



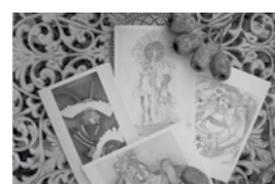
**MANDUCA BABY
CARRIER**
Made from organic cotton
and hemp. Available in 8
different colours.
Great features include inbuilt
newborn insert and extra
long hip strap.
Price: \$159



HOMEBIRTH CERTIFICATE
A personalised Homebirth Certificate is a
beautiful keepsake. Available with baby feet or
baby face as a background. Matte photo finish.
Space for baby's name, birth date, weight, height,
parents' names and other details. Price: \$15.00.



BREASTFEEDING MAMA
Fine art print by
Chrissy Butler
8x10 inches
Price: \$30.00

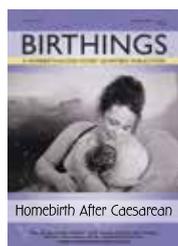


**CHRISSEY BUTLER
GIFT CARDS**
Cards and envelopes use
100% post consumer recycled
paper. Card 105 x 148mm
with C6 envelope, blank
inside. Sold individually.
Price: \$6.00

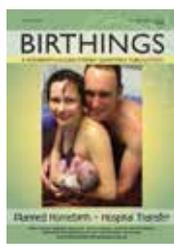


HOMEBIRTH BABY BIB!!
Available in various
colours. Price \$5.00.

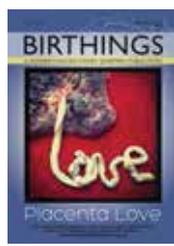
BACK ISSUES OF BIRTHINGS



ISSUE 120
Homebirth After
Caesarean
018MG \$7.00



ISSUE 121
Planned Homebirth
>Hospital Transfer
018MG \$7.00



ISSUE 122
Placenta Love
018MG \$7.00



ISSUE 123
Homebirth Support
018MG \$7.00



ISSUE 124
Homebirth Siblings
018MG \$7.00



ISSUE 125
Cultural Homebirth
018MG \$7.00

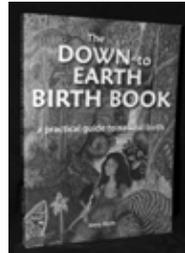


ISSUE 126
Healing Homebirth
018MG \$7.00

BOOKS, CDS AND DVDS



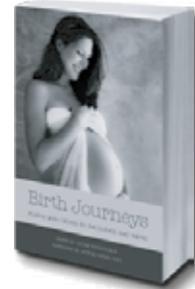
BIRTHWORK BOOK
A COMPASSIONATE GUIDE TO BEING WITH BIRTH
Jenny Blyth
Intended as a guide for anyone working with, or caring for pregnant, birthing, and new mothers. 15% discount for midwives and doulas.
Price: \$42.95.



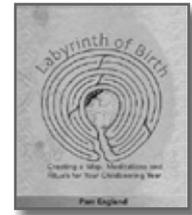
THE DOWN TO EARTH BIRTH BOOK
Jenny Blyth
A practical guide to natural birth in any setting, promoting self-nurturing, responsibility and awareness.
Price: \$65.



WATER LABOUR, WATER BIRTH
Annie Sprague
Visually beautiful and comprehensive book. A guide to the use of water in childbirth.
Price: \$20.



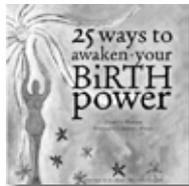
BIRTH JOURNEYS
An Australian collection of 29 diverse birth stories to encourage and inspire.
Price: \$29.95.



LABYRINTH OF BIRTH
Fourteen meditations and ceremonies designed to transform the experience of the childbirth year. Instructions for drawing/making labyrinths included.
Price: \$13.95.



25 WAYS TO JOY AND INNER PEACE FOR MOTHERS
Book and CD set.
Helps new mothers connect with baby, feel renewed, and tap into her natural instincts to find joy and satisfaction in motherhood.
Price: \$24.95.



25 WAYS TO AWAKEN YOUR BIRTH POWER BOOK
Book and CD set.
Birth preparation that includes meditation, goal setting, partner work and relaxation.
Price: \$24.95



THE BIG STRETCH DVD
Alieta Belle & Jenny Blyth
Women reflect on how the experience 'stretched' them – physically, emotionally and spiritually, with a bonus extra on baby massage. Includes booklet with birthwork topics such as pain, breathwork, and challenges. Made in Australia, approx. 60 mins.
Price: \$42.00.



THE BIG STRETCH DVD SEQUEL
Alieta Belle & Jenny Blyth
DVD sequel explores different kinds of birth including many 'variations of normal'. A celebration of natural birth. Made in Australia, approx. 2hrs.
Price: \$42.00.

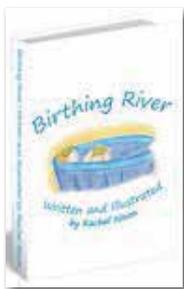


THE BUSINESS OF BEING BORN DVD.
"A Must- See for every parent to be." From Executive producer Ricki Lake and Director Abby Epstein.
Price: \$19.99.

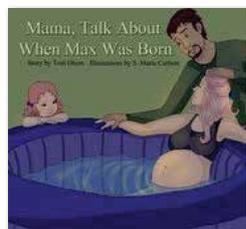


MORE BUSINESS OF BEING BORN DVD Set.
"The rare documentary that's truly changing the world. It deserves to be called Revolutionary." The complete set of all Four Films. Over 5 hours of footage. From Executive producer Ricki Lake and Director Abby Epstein.
Price: \$29.99.

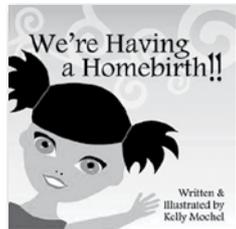
CHILDREN'S BOOKS



BIRTHING RIVER
Rachel Nixon
Written in simple rhyming verse, with soft watercolour pictures that speak to the very young. Includes the stages of birth and lotus birth. Price: \$20.



MAMA, TALK ABOUT WHEN MAX WAS BORN
Toni Olson
Children's book depicting a pregnancy journey and homebirth.
Price: \$25.00



WE'RE HAVING A HOME-BIRTH
Kelly Mochel
Colorful, contemporary book about homebirth, Covers the role of midwife, noises during birth, and breastfeeding. SKU: KMBK.
Price: \$12.00



MY BROTHER JIMI JAZZ
Chrissy Butler
Beautifully illustrated children's book about a homebirth, written from the perspective of a young girl.
Aust. 2006.
Price: \$20.00.



THE WONDERFUL PLACE BOOK
Chrissy Butler
Unique picture book that affirms the sustainability of breastfeeding. Printed on 100% post consumer recycled paper.
Price: \$20.00.

HAS In The Community

(Words by Virginia Maddock. Photos by Jerusha Sutton)



30th Homebirth Australia conference – Melbourne. May 29-31.

“Icons of Homebirth – Pearls Of Wisdom” One of the highlights of my year is attending the Homebirth Australia conference to learn more about birth and meet

with likeminded birth junkies from around Australia, and of course to help out on the HAS stall. This year was no exception... except this year I was plagued with an undiagnosed case of the very painful condition called dry socket from a molar extraction earlier that week, as well as bronchitis and laryngitis. So I was drugged up on painkillers, taking copious amounts of herbs and vitamin C, and interjecting every presentation with my coughing – sorry that was me, for those that heard! Therefore my recall is hazy, but as they say, pictures tell a thousand words so I am sure Jerusha’s photos will do it far better justice than anything I say!

The theme was “Icons of Homebirth – Pearls Of Wisdom” so there were some very experienced and well known midwives amongst the homebirth community, who told some heart-warming and heart-breaking stories from their many combined years of ‘being with women’. Highlights for me were the keynote speakers Elizabeth Davis whose book ‘Heart & Hands’ takes pride of place in my birth book library – so much birth and psychology wisdom came from this woman; HAS life member and my own midwife’s midwife Maggie Lecky-Thompson, who spoke of her own midwife experiences from the thousands of babies she helped birth and her witch hunt and deregistration in the 90s; life member Elaine Odgers-Norling who had plenty of early HAS references in her talk!; a lovely collaboration

Jane Hardwicke-Collings & Shea Caplice; another HAS life member Sonja Macgregor’s hilarious photo essay of Secret Midwives Business – Signs and Superstitions (of when women will go into labour and what kind of birth

they will have); Aussie midwife, homebirth icon and author of “Birthing with confidence” Rhea Dempsey; and birth photographer Jerusha Sutton who did a very moving photo presentation on the wonderful work of Heartfelt – there was not a dry eye in the audience! The Saturday night dinner was a hoot as always, with the comedian Fiona O’Laughlin who was hilarious in between her on stage debrief of her own traumatic birth experiences – poor woman had finally found an audience of very willing ears for those stories, but she managed to find the funny side.

The 31st Homebirth Australia conference will be held in Perth on 12th and 13th March 2016. The theme is “Traditional birth practices in the modern day” which promises to be yet another fantastic conference. HAS will again be there to sell merchandise.

Big thanks to the HBA organising committee, and to the rest of the HAS team (Amantha McGuinness, Nadine Fragosa, Rebecca Perrin and Jacqueline Cooke) who helped out selling merchandise.

Virginia



[HAS Committee members: Rebecca Perrin & Nadine Fragosa]



[Elaine Odgers-Norling]



[Robyn Thompson, Sonja MacGregor, Jan Robinson, Elizabeth Davis, Elaine Odgers-Norling, Jan Ireland, Maggie Lecky-Thompson, Therese Clifford, Rhea Dempsey]



[Erin Quinn, Lou Williamson, Jo Hunter & Vicki Chan]



[Rhea Dempsey]



[Caroline Homer, Melanie Jackson, Hannah Dahlen & Jo Hunter]



[Elizabeth Davis]



[Maggie Lecky-Thompson]



[Jerusha Sutton]



[Sheryl Sidery, with Jane Collings & Shea Caplice in the background]



Moonsong

One Day Workshops for Women 2015

Reclaiming feminine power through
reconnection with the women's mysteries.

with **JANE HARDWICKE COLLINGS**

Midwife and Teacher of the Women's Mysteries, founder of The School of Shamanic Midwifery and Moonsong.com.au

Moonsong

Reconnect with the women's wisdom within you:

- Learn about the wisdom of the cycles and our life seasons
- The influence of the lunar cycle and the earth's seasons
- The spiritual practice of menstruation and the transformative power of our rites of passage
- Understand why you feel the way you do!

It is time, women are awakening..

"MoonSong was inspirational. It really helped me to make sense of my life and where I'm going. It showed me how powerful I really am, and how to live my life to the fullest. I think MoonSong helps women understand the flow of their cycles and how empowering they actually are. It gets us in touch with our essence." Sylvie

Workshop Dates -

Sydney	Feb 22 2015
Melbourne	April 12, 2015
NNSW/SQLD	Sept 6, 2015
Sydney	Nov 6, 2015

Connecting with the Shamanic Dimensions of Pregnancy

This workshop focuses on the shamanic dimensions of pregnancy, in other words:

What lay beneath...

With prior preparation contemplating our life experiences, we will do some shamanic processes to understand the origins of our beliefs, attitudes and fears around birth, seeing the connection between how we were born, our menarche (first period) and the stories about the women in our family, as well as any experiences of pregnancy and giving birth we have had so far.

Then a *Letting Go of Fear* process and fire ritual and a shamanic drum journey to meet the baby, soul baby or Inner Goddess, to seek guidance, clarity, information etc.

This workshop is for all women. You don't have to be pregnant or planning to be and there is no prior experience necessary.

Workshop Dates -

Sydney NSW	Feb 21 2015
Melbourne VIC	April 11 2015
NNSW/SQLD	Sept 5 2015
Sydney NSW	Nov 5th 2015

For women of all ages and young women past menarche

Cost: \$180 - Fully catered | **Enquiries:** enquiries@moonsong.com.au

The Cycle of Life

By Britt Vikstrand-Richards



After about 30 minutes of pushing, which seemed like an eternity, my baby was born. She was placed on my tummy as I sat back. She was kind of purple, and wasn't moving, lying head-down on my chest. The room went deathly silent. Every one of us held our breath. The midwife blew gently on my baby's face and finally she opened her mouth, took her first breath, and kicked me hard in the chin!

Once the cord had stopped pulsating my sister cut it. My brother went off to call my mum – but when he picked up the phone she was already there. When he had called her almost an hour ago he had failed to replace the handset properly, as she had discovered when she went to call her own sister with the news. My mum had listened to every second – she had been breathing with me, wincing at my pain, and wishing my baby out – with tears rolling down her cheeks throughout.

The birth of my first daughter was, as I am sure first births are for every woman, a strange and emotional rollercoaster ride. I was doing it on my own, her father left when I was five months pregnant. Ten days after he left, while on a call to my parents, my step-mum started to cry, and explained that my father had just been diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer that had spread throughout his body. He came on the phone also in tears, fearing that he may never meet his first grandchild. Good, now I have set the scene!

I had planned a home birth in Sydney, but at 37 weeks I decided to birth in the town where my father lived. After an argument with my unsupportive midwife, and securing a midwife (a family friend) to support me, I moved temporarily into a friend's and spent every day visiting my father.

On my baby's due date I went into labour about an hour after going to bed. I got up and my friend and I called the planned entourage – brother, sisters and midwife. I laboured for around five hours. I was being filmed by a sister and the huge entourage included my hosts' one-year-old daughter and a massive golden retriever. I spent time sitting on a chair in the shower, and later on all fours on a mattress in the living room. My sister later told me she had at least two hours footage of my not-so-small behind! Contractions were manageable and somehow the pain was bearable because I knew it was for a reason, it wasn't related to injury. My brother called my mother in the UK to let her know what was happening.

I distinctly remember swearing – quite a lot, whenever the pain was intense. At one stage my midwife quietly said to me “Perhaps you could try saying ‘yes’ instead of ‘fuck’, you’ll find it helps you to open.” I didn't seem to care too much about opening right then!

Three hours after my daughter Scarlet was born I dressed and drove myself 20 km to my father's house to introduce his grandchild. He was so proud and happy, as was I. Five days later my father passed away, and so the cycle of life continued. My first few weeks of motherhood were so full of love, and I felt so supported by my wonderful family, who were all coping with the simultaneous joy of birth and tragedy of death.

As I went into the second-stage of labour I totally entered ‘the zone.’ I could have been giving birth on the main stage of The Albert Hall for all I cared, I was in my own little bubble of focus, working hard!

I was tetchy though – during contractions anyone that made the slightest noise was angrily hushed into silence. As a single mum I couldn't have been more loved and supported. For the actual birth of my daughter I was sitting with a brother on one side and a sister on my other, supporting me with my arms around their shoulders.

Britt Vikstrand-Richards is a home-birthing mum of two, and a student midwife, living on the Mid North Coast. Growing up in the UK home-birthing was simply ‘the way we did it in my family’. Britt hopes to open a Birthing House upon graduation, enabling more women in the area to birth at home, or in a truly supportive, woman focused home-like setting.



Karen's Birth of Samuel

By Karen Roberts



Everything I needed to learn about nesting instincts I learned from a cat. She wasn't even my cat. Molly belonged to our neighbour, but clearly felt a house full of noisy teenagers was not where she wanted to have her kittens. We were used to her friendly comings and goings from our place, but were somewhat surprised when she chose a dark corner of our wardrobe to have her babies. I put some old towels down for her and left her to it. She popped them out quickly and easily, purring loudly the whole while. She was a natural mum, protective and clearly quite blissed out by her five kittens suckling. I was 27 and this was my first experience of witnessing birth (other than the usual hysterics on TV shows.) I had never even held a baby before, except one hold of a newborn cousin as a child and none of our family or friends were at the babies stage.

I thought of Molly a year later when I was pregnant. It had taken a year to conceive the baby who would become my first daughter, Eva. I had had an early miscarriage, which entailed a visit to the hospital near where we lived in Northamptonshire, UK. The hospital experience gave me a taste of the kind of impersonal and cold environment in which I might have to have a baby. I wondered why I couldn't be more like Molly, and find somewhere safe and private to give birth simply and fuss free. It became increasingly obvious that place was... home.

I thought of Molly again when I was in labour with Eva. My birth pool was like a big nest; a safe, enclosed space in our living room. I focused on how quick and easy it had been for the cat. I thought, "if it's instinctive and natural for her it can be for me - I'm a mammal too."

I'd discussed my intention to home birth with no one except my husband, Tim, who has always had an amazing degree of faith in me. I wanted to be clear in my own heart and mind, uninfluenced by the worries and opinions of family and friends - some of who were in the medical profession and not inclined to look favourably upon my choice. I did a lot of reading on the topic, which only reinforced the earlier conclusion of my instincts. I also wrote copious pages in notebooks to make sure I was being as in touch as I could with my fears and beliefs.

Eva was born after 10 hours tough labour, with my husband Tim and midwife Liz present. I was so blissed out and joyous upon her arrival, I literally felt like I was in heaven. Reality (or regular consciousness) eventually seeped in, but I'll never forget that first, sacred week. Apart from making me wonder how it ever would have been possible for me to birth out of water, let alone out of home, it made me feel very strongly about the need for a decent "babymoon". Being a private person with an uneasy relationship with family, I have always shuddered at the idea of being descended upon during that intimate post-birth time.

I thought of Molly again when I was in labour with Eva. My birth pool was like a big nest; a safe, enclosed space in our living room. I focused on how quick and easy it had been for the cat. I thought, “if it’s instinctive and natural for her it can be for me - I’m a mammal too.”

I’d discussed my intention to home birth with no one except my husband, Tim, who has always had an amazing degree of faith in me. I wanted to be clear in my own heart and mind, uninfluenced by the worries and opinions of family and friends - some of who were in the medical profession and not inclined to look favourably upon my choice. I did a lot of reading on the topic, which only reinforced the earlier conclusion of my instincts. I also wrote copious pages in notebooks to make sure I was being as in touch as I could with my fears and beliefs.

Eva was born after 10 hours tough labour, with my husband Tim and midwife Liz present. I was so blissed out and joyous upon her arrival, I literally felt like I was in heaven. Reality (or regular consciousness) eventually seeped in, but I’ll never forget that first, sacred week. Apart from making me wonder how it ever would have been possible for me to birth out of water, let alone out of home, it made me feel very strongly about the need for a decent “babymoon”. Being a private person with an uneasy relationship with family, I have always shuddered at the idea of being descended upon during that intimate post-birth time. Plenty of time for visits later. With each of my four births I gently insisted on at least 3 weeks babymoon, and one way or another that’s what I got (it helped that both our families lived far away). I didn’t feel bad about it. The cat made no apologies for wanting to be left alone!

Still living in the same house in the UK, I birthed my second daughter, Isla. I hadn’t been able to have the same midwife I’d clicked with for Eva’s birth, so settled for a couple of midwives just starting their independent practice, even though I didn’t feel comfortable with them. They were well-meaning women, but we were on a different wavelength about birth.. One of them requested to bring her (reluctant) teenage daughter to my birthing “for her educational benefit”, the other offered to video the birth with peppy running commentary...not really what I had in mind. My anxieties grew with each visit we had, but I didn’t feel I had any other acceptable options so just kept trusting that things would work out. I worked really hard preparing myself. It felt like preparing to die somehow. Death of the ego, maybe. I focused on birthing as it was meant to be – minus the fears and negative beliefs. I journalled, did artwork, focused on an “easy” birth and bringing my subconscious belief patterns to light... anything my intuition led me to do.

At 39 weeks I remember one night before bed deciding

I should really make sure the house was extra tidy and all my birth stuff set up “just in case”. I woke later, in the early hours of the morning, asked Tim to get the pool ready. I lit my candles and got in the pool. Somehow no one was more shocked than I when Isla arrived in the birthpool after a only couple of hours intense surrendering, but no real “pain”, just an amazing feeling of being complete open and surrendered. I began to glimpse how women could possibly have “ecstatic” or “orgasmic” birth. Two year old Eva had slept through the whole thing. It was beautifully “normal,” just Tim and I, in our own living room. I didn’t even feel tired and felt I could’ve gone for a long walk afterwards. We hadn’t called the midwives, having expected there’d be plenty of time. In my labour-brain it had never seriously crossed my mind, and Tim was content to trust whatever I wanted. I remember feeling like I had an inner midwife, with clear instructions coming to me on how to position myself, when to hold still etc. My midwives arrived later that morning to check all was well and leave us to it. I had decided to try a lotus birth with Isla, but never quite got past the “weird” factor and practical hindrances and eventually cut the cord myself after three days.

Six years before Isla’s birth I had arrived in the UK as a solo backpacker. I finally returned to Australia, but now with a British husband and two British-born daughters. We had spent six months travelling Europe in a motorhome after selling up, and upon arrival in Australia eventually settled in the Blue Mountains. When Eva was eight and Isla was six we had our third home waterbirth - a boy we called Nate. I think I had expected birth to get progressively easier and better with each child. Not so. I did not feel great about Nate’s birth. I had a lovely midwife, but I did not feel good within myself. A lot had happened in the six years since Isla’s birth and I had felt a little depressed and off-centre for a long time. At 37 weeks I had three days of dispiriting pre-labour (common for posterior babies) I felt bad for calling my midwife out for the false start. Then when labour really began I still had memories of Isla’s easy birth and was unprepared for how tough it could be (selective memory!) I felt stuck, distracted by wanting my daughters to witness a wonderful natural birth, and generally lost myself mid-labour in deluded fantasies of C-sections and hospitals!!

Eventually, with some wise words from my midwife, I realised the only way out was through. At her suggestion, I kept repeating “I can do this,” to myself until I finally started to believe it a little. I then asked everyone to leave the room and pushed with all my might. It felt like it wasn’t ideal, but I just wanted it over. I liken it to being constipated. You know ideally you’d just “allow” it out but sometimes things feel stuck! In the scheme of things though, still a healthy successful complication- free homebirth.

On the other hand, the postpartum energy of Nate's birth and the power of that sense of, "I can do it if I think I can!" got me out of a slump I'd been in for a few years. I got fit, healthy, lost some weight, regained a sense of wellbeing and purpose and thoroughly enjoyed my "second wind" of motherhood - so much so that we decided to have a fourth baby. I felt this was my chance to garner everything I'd learnt about pregnancy and birth and really trust the whole process once and for all. I was careful to stay healthy and fit and not gain a load of weight like with my other pregnancies. I walked and meditated every day. Focused on my affirmations and worked through the resistance, keeping it real. One of my biggest fears was of another birth like Nate's. It may not have been that bad in some people's thinking, but I found the pre-labour so dispiriting, and I had hated feeling so negative and off centre and was very scared to feel so "stuck" again. I was determined to take responsibility, believe in myself, and trust my instincts without question. I knew I could do it.

I'm not a big fan of pain (is anyone?) I was lucky enough to have my same midwife again, but to be honest I still felt birth was so private and I hated that feeling of having someone listening and waiting for me, however lovely they might be. The good old poo (or sex) analogy again, but I felt like I wouldn't have someone in attendance while I went to the bathroom, or was in the bedroom and those same instincts for privacy were there for me for birth. And yet how to reconcile that with my need to feel safe? What if something went wrong? I stopped trying to work these questions out with my mind, accepted I just didn't know and just.... trusted.

I kept trusting when I found out I had another posterior baby. I let go and I let go some more. I kept trusting when I had another false start/ pre-labour draining my spirits as we drained the birth pool water back out. At this point I realized I'd been "trying too hard" and let go of that too. I realized I was way too hard on myself, and vowed



What trusting my instincts meant in practice was hiring a carpenter! I wanted to put double sliding doors on our front room so I could close and lock it if I wanted. I didn't want to be interrupted by a toddler - or anyone - and I let go of wanting my daughters to witness natural birth "for their educational benefit." No - this birth was going to be me doing things my completely my way, unapologetically. It was about total trust in some higher force too, because it felt to rely on 'me' and my abilities was ego- based. I believed in the power of God/Goddess through me. I had some big fears come up.

not to force myself to do anything, as there had ironically been a sense of "forcing" myself to surrender like some kind of martyr. Every time fear washed over me I'd just let it and comfort myself that I wouldn't make myself do anything I didn't feel like, I wouldn't try to be a hero, I'd just be real and be kind to myself. Real and kind. As a family we had a welcoming ritual, when I realized we hadn't really made proper space in our minds and hearts for a fourth child. After dinner, amidst the mess and chaos of family life we simply lit a candle and each told baby how much we were looking forward to meeting him.

A few nights later I started having contractions for real, though I kept it from my children as I wanted them to go to bed and leave me to it. About one AM I got Tim to fill the birth pool. Soon I was in it, candles lit in my front room, listening to an Eckhart Tolle compilation. It was the perfect music. Just taking each moment as it came. Trusting. After an hour or two I said to Tim he could call the midwife. Whilst she was on her way my beautiful boy arrived in the water and his Daddy brought him to the surface. I didn't know it, but I had unwittingly orchestrated the second freebirth my heart had wanted but my head hadn't. Labour had been about three and a half hours in total. It took intense presence, and complete trust and it unfolded so perfectly. My first feelings and thoughts were just utter gratitude for this whole beautiful journey. It felt like all my birth experiences had culminated in this one perfect birth. But each birth had been perfect too in its own unique way, giving me just the lessons I needed to learn.

My girls and Nate met their new brother, I chatted with my midwife and then they left the room so I just had Tim to help me birth the placenta. I'd decided to wait and see what I felt like doing with the cord and placenta until the birth. I was a little surprised that my instincts said to do another lotus birth (I hadn't with Nate, not having got a lot from it with Isla). So glad I did. It really helped keep that beautiful sacred energy by slowing things down. It was a symbolic continuation of allowing things to unfold and not forcing anything. After three days it dropped off by itself and we planted the placenta in the garden.

I have gained so much more than words can say from my journey with homebirth. It has brought me further along the continuum, from being up in my head, controlling and untrusting life a little further towards the other end - being present, in my body and feeling such awareness of the unfolding perfection of life.

Karen lives with her husband, Tim, their daughters Eva, (11) Isla, (9) and sons Nate (2.5) and Samuel (5 months) in the Blue Mountains. Karen has dabbled in teaching and childcare and is currently a stay at home mum. She is essentially an unashamed nerd and homebody, being most often found in her favourite places: the garden, the kitchen or the local library.

Birthing Breeze

Enhance your primal birth instincts

Hypnobirthing Australia™ Classes

*for your beautiful, calm,
empowering and positive
birth experience.*

Small group classes
Private classes
Online classes available

Pregnancy Massage

*Nourish and celebrate
your body, mind and spirit
for a wonderful motherhood!*

www.birthingbreeze.com.au

www.facebook.com/birthingbreeze

bitna@birthingbreeze.com.au

0433 952 104

Lindy's Birth of Tara

By Lindy Davies

Grandmother's Blessing

Bright star is falling
Has chosen life mother father
Brothers
Her soul is guided from rivers tears and song
She is clad in smooth waters and gentle womb
Carried through time to grow
Always listening, tiny laughter, hearty drum
Lindys soft internal praise, my daughter, our goddess
Sam, gentle passion, guiding strength
Eachan ...tall deep with song
Djarrah ...heart creation
Zenith... determined elf
Tao ...spirit star child
Our goddess waits, her waters are safe warm and nurturing
Blue moon approaches
Waits
Moon tides, waves back and forth, breathe the breath
Lindy now in her flow, waters break
The moon is blue
Tara Poem is blessed, child of rivers tears and song
Our goddess
We kiss your toes your belly your lips
I am blessed

~ Nana Rob



Good blue moon to you all. It was a very special blue moon for us, little Tara Poem Robina (Robyn and Dina put together!) Loos graced us with her presence at 12 past 8 this morning on the veranda of Sam's parents' house in the morning sun with a big circle of Sam and a big circle of women, who helped me through my mind back into a space of self belief just when I started to question myself and Tara came five minutes later! We had a beautiful birthing journey with a most productive pain that you only experience to bring little Gods and Goddesses into this life plane. And what a Goddess! Another beautiful birth at home. :)

Photos by Mieke Elzer



With My Body I Speak the Truth of Birth

By Sammi Cambray

Was it all for this? To travel through four years of healing from Bodhi's birth, delving into my soul to nurture those broken parts of me; ten months of wonderfully delicious pregnancy, setting intentions, connecting with my baby and nourishing both of us on; and many blissful hours of early labour - just to come back to this dark place? Surely it cannot be.

It is late in the afternoon, and I am labouring hard. My pulse beats robustly with the strength and intensity of this pain, this task. I find myself no longer saying I can, embracing and being present with each expansion, using my voice to ride with the sensations of birthing. I lose myself.

I am pleading now, please take me to hospital, please give me pain relief. I cannot bear the physicality of this experience anymore, and this is now reflected in my mental and emotional being. I feel desperate, empty. I feel like no one in the room is truly hearing how bad this is for me. I believe deeply that I cannot do this, and that no one else shares this belief is the ultimate loneliness for me. That aloneness, these travails, brings me straight back to Bodhi's birth. Transcendent trauma. History repeating.

Most of all, I feel a sense of betraying myself for harbouring these feelings within me.

Before this, in the deepest hours of night's darkness. Two nights ago, I labour overnight, after many days of surrendering to the ebb and flow of a body and heart approaching labour. I realise the truth that this ebb and flow- the contractions that would come and go, the mental readiness I felt, or not- was a mechanism that would ensure that once I truly did enter labour, I would be undoubtedly ready and would embrace it with all of my being.

That first night of labour is bliss. On a physical level, I could actually feel the opening of my womb with each expansion. It was not a painful feeling at all, but a pleasurable one, and even in those early hours, as it became clear that yes, this was labour, I felt the peak and rhythm of each one, like a wave. A few seconds before each one, I would feel a tingling, like excitement, and energy spiralling into me. I felt alive in every cell and totally inward.

With each expansion, my mantra was this:

"I am opening in sweet surrender

To the beautiful baby inside my womb

I am opening in sweet surrender



To the beautiful baby inside my womb

I am opening

I am opening

I am opening

I am opening"

Bodhi wakes and lies with me, I hold him as I labour. Zai lights the fire, it feels to me like he is standing guard. Then we all sleep again.

The contractions stop at dawn and return two nights later. Again, bliss. I do reiki on baby and me, speak softly to reassure her in the midst of the fear I sense she holds. I see her clearly in these dark hours, a vital and lovely newborn girl, red and healthy.

Feeling completely whole in my energy system, and that of my little baby, we journey on. With every expansion I felt the energy of the universe spiralling into me, and then dispersing back out. It was ecstatic, expansive, open. Incredible.

I have created the perfect birthing nest- dark, private, warm and quiet. By candle and firelight, in my bed bedecked in muslin curtains, as my family sleeps and the wind howls outside, I labour.

This birthing continuum- the sacred cycle from calling this baby into my womb, through conscious conception, a pregnancy filled with yoga and art and stillness and love, and into the bliss and tribulation of labour and further through into the baby's emergence into the world- has brought me into alignment with the pure woman who lies inside. The archetypal woman in all of us, Great Mother, Ever-loving partner, Creative consciousness and being.

Part of this initiation lies within Bodhi's birth, and perhaps more importantly, choosing to do everything to heal those wounds rather than allowing them to remain stagnant and hurt me more. Part of the initiation comes from moving to Bellingen, and the energies of transformation and growth that both this land, and the community I find myself within, moves within me. Some of it comes from my work with women, and the psyche. But all of this is just the path- the initiation truly springs from the seed inside all of us, the feminine energies who yearn to grow.

As the sun rises, again my contractions leave. We journey down to the farmer's markets. I feel Birth still dwelling beside me, and before long I am rolling with the waves of blissful expansions again. This is transcendent.

I start to feel an altered sense of reality. Like I am much, much taller, and feeling dizzy. I see people in the crowd. All these people from the community that I am so connected to, this beautiful community, this sacred land, the band playing a song about the pureness of a beautiful day. For a little while I dance. I am at the centre of it all. And at the centre of me, my baby.

The expansions are coming swiftly now, so we retreat.

Later, the sensations now painful. I sit in our hammock, rocking gently with each expansion. I chant a few long oms with each surge and stare out over the valley and the ridge; the beautiful verdant green landscape that grounds me and reminds me of the web of life I am part of. At the end of each expansion, I whisper Om Jaiya. In between, I listen to the sound of Zai chopping wood such an earthy, homey sound that reassures me of the natural process I am in, and fills me with love and gratitude for my ever-loving man.

Later again, retreating from the expansiveness of the veranda to the shower.

In my dozy, trance state, I notice two daddy long legs spiders climbing up the shower wall, trying to avoid the stream of water. I feel a connection to these spiders, and an incredible compassion for them.

I also remember a conversation that I had with my doula some weeks ago- that birth is a verb- the "giving" part of giving birth is the most important way to help birth flow easily. If we as women can be focused on what we are giving to our baby- the immense act of love, and allowing ourselves to go through such a challenging, painful event - as well as keeping the love flowing from us to our partners, children and others in the birth space- we will be less engaged with the physical pain, and come from a frame of mind more apt to deal with it well.

So those spiders mean a lot. At this moment, that's where my love flows. One by one, I let them crawl onto my hand, and place them safely on the window sill, where they can continue their creation of intricate webs and whatever else it is that spiders spend their time on in peace.

Later again, surrendering to the intensity and immersing myself in the relief of the warm birth pool. As the intensity begins to bear down on me again, I look up at the ceiling of the yurt. On one panel, in the knots and natural patterning in the timber, I see a goddess in woman form, with two circles of light at each hand- her children. I am that goddess woman, mama of two children, one being born as I watched. That goddess looks over me all afternoon- it was now well past midday- and I fix my gaze on her many times as the afternoon ages.

I am aware of Zai, Bodhi, my doula and midwife moving around me, but I begin to feel further and further away from them. And I feel myself begin to disintegrate, an urge to scream and complain about the pain, a rebelling against the process.

Was it all to come to this? All my preparation, my healing, my intentions are lead to this, and still this outcome, this trauma.

I cannot accept this.

Is this the surrender and letting go I never truly could conceptualise before this moment? The course is set now, there is nothing I can do but endure.

But there is something. I can bring myself back into strength, mentally. I know when I look back on this birth, this is the moment I will most regret or celebrate- that point in time where I could lose myself forever in the trauma, or whilst acknowledging it's message about the strength of my labour- the very strength that comes from me- is equalled and countered by the strength of who I am at my deepest core.

So I start in a small way. On finding myself shaking my head with the onset of the pain, I instead nod.

I say yes.

I smile.

I stop myself from complaining verbally, and instead harness that energy back into my toning.

I connect with my baby, rub my belly.

And things begin to shift. The greater part of me, the wise woman, the ancient, rises above the part of me that

is already done in and cannot go further.

And in the stage of bringing my baby down, I witness an amazing transformation in my body. The urge- the full engagement of my body into pushing moves so powerful through me that I have no fear when it takes a little longer than expected for her to crown. Still great pain, and tiredness, and a rushing pulse, and perhaps most acutely discomfort from kneeling on the soft bottom of the birth pool for so long.

I can feel my baby now, when I reach a finger up, she is right there. Right there, just an inch or two from my vulva. My baby, so close.

And then, the feeling of the stretch of the vulva and perineum. Not as intense as I would have thought. I can feel the expansion, but the pain is lost in feelings of love and anticipation.

The head emerges halfway but retreats back in again. Zai holds my hands. The head emerges again and remains out. My midwife says the baby will now turn and the shoulders will come out one at a time. I feel the surge approaching.

This was it- the moment of truth. Shoulder dystocia, all my fears around having a big baby- all of this was about to either happen or not. The moment of truth, in experiencing and exploring this fear and the meanings of it, the most significant moment of my pregnancy and perhaps my life.

I summon all my strength and open to birth's path. This was it- the moment I was pure woman, pure mama.

The expansion begins to fade. I reassure myself, the shoulders sometimes take a contraction or two to come out. It is not an emergency yet. I am totally in the moment, not fear.

"Keep going!" The midwife exclaims from the mists of the fading expansion. "It's just the body to go!"

The moment of truth- the shoulders were born with such ease I didn't even realise it!

A second of deep surprise and back into my womanly giving. I push, so hard but at the same time so effortlessly, and feel the most amazing, vivid, shifting feeling ever- my baby emerges completely, slides out of my body, and into a world surrounded in light.

The sun has set.

And then, I take her through the water and into my arms. Oh my God. My little one, my little baby, here, alive, with

me. She looks straight into my eyes with a look of awe and surprise. She is here. She is here. All there is, is her. The weight of her, the slippery feel of vernix. Her presence.

"You're here," I whisper. "Welcome, little one, your birth journey is over."

It is Bodhi's presence I am first aware of outside of the sacred cocoon of baby and me. He comes to my side, amazed, looking at the baby. A minute or less has passed since the birth, and baby has not yet cried or taken breath.

"The baby needs you to call him in, Bodhi" I say. "You stroke his head; tell him how much you love him."

Bodhi reaches out and strokes the wet hair of the baby, whispers, "I love you." The baby squirms, and then starts to cry. Loud, lusty cries, which I speak to soothingly. "It's okay, you've had such a big journey. You are here now, you are safe in mama's arms, I am your mama."

The baby cries on until I offer a breast, and she latches on easily. I invite Bodhi into the pool, and swiftly he takes off his clothes and jumps in. I am holding my two little one, mama in bliss. Baby suckles easily and lovingly.

We soon discover, to my delight, she is a girl. A moment of surprise for the others, because despite my visions and intuition, I had expressed that I thought she was a boy after birth.

In a quiet, private moment by the fire, Zai and I name our little girl Jaiya Indali Samara Cambray.

In the hours and days that follow, the birth settles into me. At first I feel battered, drained emotionally and physically, raw. But at the same time, euphoria as I spend hours gazing into Jaiya's eyes. This love and bond that is blossoming opens the path for euphoria of birth - that I come to experience the full and complete satisfaction of birthing my baby lovingly at home, birthing after a caesarean, at forty two weeks to a 'large' baby. I had conquered so many demons and listened to that inner voice that told me to simply trust, love, and birth.

The story weaves itself into my psyche.

In the weeks that follow, I have reframed the disappointment I held in myself for the way I experienced transition as gratefulness for the complete disintegration and reprogramming of myself that happened therein, and deciding not to choose the path of trauma as in Bodhi's birth, but to uncover untold wellsprings of womanly strength.

This birth is the ultimate resetting. I completely countered and brought to an end the belief and pattern that I do not bring my intentions to fruition in my life. I birthed with the deepest authenticity to my beliefs about birth as initiation, as an act of love, as natural and sacred. I see in myself a greater sense of self-confidence, as a greater presence as a mama.

My little girl has gifted me all this. And I love her, so deeply, and so completely. Om Jaiya!

Sammi Cambray sits in humble awe of the amazing, profound, beautiful and sacred work of the birthing mother- She is deeply inspired, moved, and informed by the path of the mama- the heart opening, creating, wrenching, challenging, deepening, surrendering, trusting, dismantling, wild journey of immensity that it is.



Sammi is a Doula, Birth Counsellor and writer, and runs Mama Rising Holistic Doula Services, and Sacred Whisper Bellingen. She is currently close to birthing her fourth precious child.



ADVERTISE IN BIRTHINGS

Birthings is distributed quarterly to 300 members and is also available beyond its publication date through our online store.

The readership is increased again as the magazine is also available in the waiting rooms of birth centres, midwives and natural practitioners.

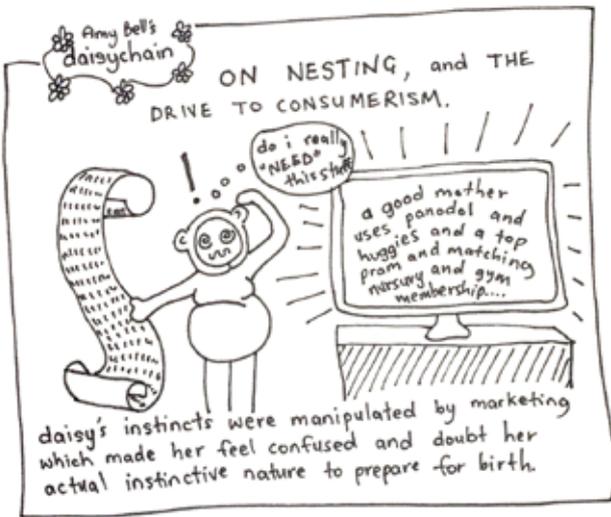
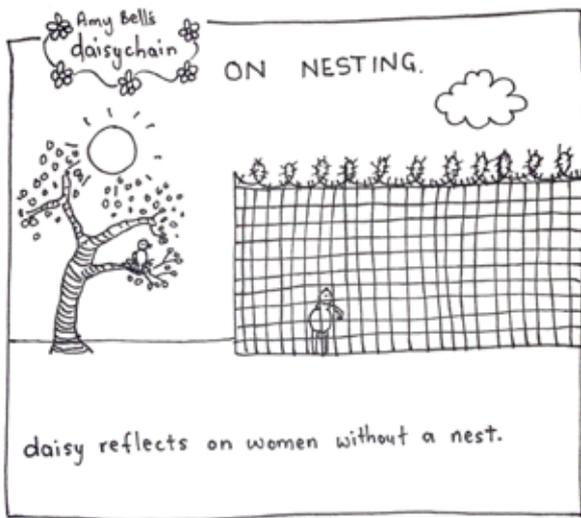
By choosing to advertise in Birthings your organisation can make direct contact with first-time parents who are considering their birth options. As well as people who were not satisfied with their previous birth experience/s and are looking for alternatives. Both audiences are open and receptive to new information, services and products.

Our rates are very affordable and reach a targeted audience of eco-conscious individuals and natural minded parents throughout the greater Sydney region.

Advertising revenue assists HAS to promote and support homebirth as an accessible and attainable birthing option.

If you are interested in advertising and supporting HAS, please contact Serene Johnson: advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au





Art meets activism. **Amy bell** is an activist, creator of Daisychain and illustrator. She is currently working on children's books and daisychain merchandise. Daisychain is Amy Bell's cartoon exploration of the mundane world. Amy also creates personal character cards for friends. Daisychain is created directly as inspired, no edits, organic and free range. Each cartoon takes a minute or two. You can follow Amy Bell on Instagram ([amyrobinabell](#)) and on facebook ([Amy Bell-Daisychain.](#))



noriko amies
massage for women and babies



Extensive experience working with pregnant women, offering mobile massage service and doula support.

Health fund registered

- Pregnancy massage
- Postnatal massage
- Baby massage class
- Remedial massage
- Doula support
- Doula for children
- Placenta encapsulation

Based in Eastern Suburbs, but will travel throughout Sydney

0410 547 980
norikoamies@gmail.com
www.norikoamies.com

Dads! Come celebrate Homebirth Awareness Week at:
The 'Homebirth Dads Night Out!' #2!



This fun male-friendly and dad-focused night will be for expectant dads planning for homebirth and wanting to learn more, and for new/seasoned homebirth dads who wish to meet and network with each other, to share their stories and wisdom with and for the benefit of the expecting dads.

6:30pm: Doors open

7pm: Introduction from HA S Coordinator Virginia Maddock, and co-host Gary Caganoff

7:20pm: Homebirth stories by dads

8pm: Dinner

8:30pm: Midwife panel with homebirth midwives Janine O'Brien and Jo Hunter.

Sunday 25th October 6:30pm

PJ's Irish Pub:

74 Church St (Cnr of Parks St), Parramatta

Tickets \$10

Contact our Events Coordinator
Janine O'Brien: Janine@ibirth.com.au

Generously Sponsored by:

Hills Spinal Health,
Oz Baby Trends and Sam Saidi



Homebirth Access Sydney Annual

DICNIC

"Come along and celebrate Homebirth Awareness Week"

Wednesday 28th October

10:30am - 1:30pm

Petersham Park

Station, Brighton and West Sts, Petersham (near the playground and aquatic centre)

- Bring some food to share and your swimmers if it's hot
- HAS will be bringing some homebirth mums and bubs apparel to sell so bring some cash with you

Contact Virginia 0415 683 074

PRE-NATAL SERVICES

MASSAGE FOR WOMEN AND BABIES

Mobile Massage Service for All Areas in Sydney.

Supporting women before, during and after birth, offering:

- Pregnancy Massage
- Postnatal Massage
- Labour Trigger Massage
- Baby Massage Class
- Reflexology
- Remedial Massage
- Massage and Acupressure Lecture for Partner
- Doula Service
- Placenta Encapsulation
- Child Care/Housework Support

Private health fund rebates are available.

Noriko Amies

Health Funds Registered Remedial Massage Therapist and Doula

www.norikoamies.com

0410547980

InnerWest

BIRTH SENSE WITH JACKI MCFARLANE

Birth Art Group, Prenatal Counselling, Hypnosis and Creative Preparation for Pregnancy Wellbeing and Positive Birthing.

For group details and individual sessions please phone Jacki:

90433079 or 0419286619

ackichip@internode.on.net

KRISTIANE HEIDRICH

In Adults CranioSacral Therapy Treats a wide range of conditions such as:

- Sensory Integration Disorders/ Learning Disabilities
- Dizziness
- Tinnitus
- Emotional Difficulties: Depression, Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, Anxiety
- Digestive Issues including Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Sleep Disorders
- Unexplained (Tooth) pains
- Migraines and Headaches
- Chronic Neck and Back Pain
- Motor-Coordination Impairments
- Stress and Tension-Related Problems
- Traumatic Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries
- Chronic Fatigue/ Exhaustion
- Scoliosis
- Central Nervous System Disorders
- Temporo-mandibular Joint Syndrome (TMJ)

Kristiane Heidrich is a mother of 3 children aged 21, 19 and 17.

She is a Physiotherapist, Massage Therapist, CranioSacral Therapist, SomaticEmotional Release Therapist, Visceral Manipulation

Therapist and a teacher of these therapies. CranioSacral Therapy enabled her to realise that instead of pushing against the body's restrictions causing 'dis-ease', that she could follow the body's own innate patterns and wisdom to facilitate the healing process. Kristiane has a special interest in working with mothers in the pre-conception (fertility) phase, during pregnancy, postpartum and also treats children of all ages in her clinic (0-90). She is a Doula, a Placenta Encapsulator and a midwifery student at UTS.

For fees/conditions and further information contact 0405 501 012 or visit the website www.ashfieldphysio.com.au

Southern Highlands

PREGNANCY WORKSHOPS

Midwife Jane Hardwicke Collings gives regular workshops –

“Pregnancy The Inner Journey” – in the Southern Highlands and in other places by arrangement. As well as “The School of Shamanic Midwifery” – a women's mysteries school for doulas and midwives

Jane Hardwicke Collings

0248882002, 0408035808

janecollings@bigpond.com

www.moonsong.com.au

www.placentalremedy.com

Sutherland / St George

ACTIVE CALMBIRTH® COURSES SYLVANIA

The calmbirth® course imparts the knowledge of birth preparation techniques such as deep relaxation, visualisation, breathing, positive imagery, attitudes/expectancy to achieve a rewarding, easier, more comfortable stress-free birthing experience. Julie Clarke is an experienced homebirther. Many women who have done the calmbirth® course during their pregnancy are far more likely to have positive feelings about their birthing experience. Their partners and midwives are quite often very impressed with how beautifully they've worked with their body during the labour.

For enquiries of dates and available times and bookings phone 95446441 - available weekends, weekdays, evenings. Visit: www.julieclarke.com.au see website for dates and discount.

Special note: Julie's calmbirth® course is very reasonably priced.

Mobile: 0401265530 / 9544 6441.

9 Withybrook pl. Sylvania (20mins south of airport).

NATURAL BEGINNINGS

Herbal Medicine, Nutrition & Birth Support

I have a very personal interest in treating preconception, pregnancy and children's health, naturally. With some help from herbs and nutrition, my partner and I prepared our bodies' health naturally for conscious conception, and I enjoyed 2 trouble free pregnancies, and gave birth at home to my 2 healthy, full term baby boys and they continue to enjoy perfect health. You too can benefit from my experience in natural health care.

I can assist you with:

- ~ preconception health and natural fertility
- ~ preparing for a healthier baby
- ~ overcoming health conditions, (including during pregnancy)
- ~ preparing your body and mind for a better birth
- ~ birth support for mum & dad, and/or siblings
- ~ treating your children's health naturally
- ~ chemical-free home-made herbal skin products

Natural Pregnancy, Birth and Post-Natal Kits also available which make great gifts for the expectant or new Mum!

Virginia Maddock

Herbalist, Nutritionist & Doula

0415683074. 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah 2229

www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

TRANSITION INTO PARENTHOOD

Active Birth and Newborn Care Courses

The most comprehensive and best value birth and parenting courses in Sydney. Facilitator is Julie Clarke who is respected as a specialist in natural active birth including waterbirth. Importantly she also presents information beyond the birth to encompass the newborn period, specially on the practicalities and reducing stress, helping you to enjoy the first weeks as a family. Pregnant couples receive professionally presented, well organised course notes. Very suitable for homebirth, birth centre and delivery suite.

See Julie's website for more details, birth stories and pictures, and information. www.julieclarke.com.au

Julie has a great sense of humour and a very gentle approach, she is regarded as one of the most inspirational educators in Sydney. Good variety of courses to choose from: 8 wk evening course 1 night per week, or 2 full Saturdays condensed or 1 full Sunday super condensed.

Julie is a unique birth educator who also provides post natal in home baby care support service exclusively to the couples who have attended her courses.

Julie Clarke / julie@julieclarke.com.au / Mobile: 0401265530

Landline:(02)9544 6441

HYPNOBIRTHING AUSTRALIA™ COURSE

Hypnobirthing Australia™ program is a unique, modern and comprehensive antenatal education to suit Australian needs.

Be Prepared for an easier, safer, gentle and empowering birth experience through discovering and optimizing the power of our mindset, deep relaxation, visualisation, self-hypnosis, specific breathing techniques and other practical information covered in our classes.

#Special price offer for HAS members.

w: www.birthingbreeze.com.au

f: www.facebook.com/birthingbreeze

e: bitna@birthingbreeze.com.au

m: 0433 952 104

DOULA SERVICES

NATURAL BEGINNINGS

HOLISTIC HEALTH AND DOULA SERVICE

As a homebirth mum, I have the experience and trust in natural birth to be your ideal birth support, whether you choose to birth at home, in hospital or birth centre.

As a natural therapist, I have the resources to assist you with reiki massage, herbs and flower essences in case the journey of labour becomes difficult.

As an ex-nanny, I can help look after older siblings so that Mum can focus on birthing, Dad can focus on Mum, and older sister or brother can still feel important and included in the process, without fear.

My birth package includes 3 prenatal visits, birth support incl. herbs/flower essences and reiki massage, birth photography, follow up visit, and all your edited digital photos of your birth for you to keep.

Natural Pregnancy, Birth and Post-Natal Kits also available which make great gifts for the expectant or new Mum.

Virginia Maddock
Herbalist, Nutritionist & Doula
0415683074
5 Balfour Ave Caringbah 2229
www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

ELS VAN LUEEWAN

Qualified Doula, Childbirth Educator and Child Care Worker, providing personal care and practical support in honour of your authentic and empowered path through birth and early parenting. Please get in touch to arrange an obligation free meeting.
0403233719
els76@hotmail.com

PLACENTA SERVICES

KRISTIANE HEIDRICH - Placenta Encapsulation

Specialist Offering

- ~Raw Encapsulation
- ~Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Encapsulation
- ~Placenta Tincture (optional as homoeopathic remedy)
- ~Placenta Smoothie

For fees/conditions and further information contact 0405 501 012 or visit the website www.ashfieldphysio.com.au

LOTUS BORN - Lotus Birth Supplies

Lotus Birth Kits, Placenta Bags, Placenta Wrapping Cloths and Drying Herbs.

All Lotus Born products come with full Lotus Birth instructions.

We welcome custom orders.
www.etsy.com/shop/lotusborn
lotusborn@y7mail.com

NATURAL BEGINNINGS

Doula, herbalist and nutritionist Virginia Maddock is now offering placenta encapsulation give back what your body has lost after birth.

The placenta can be ingested in a palatable way once it is dried and encapsulated, to nourish your body and replace nutrients and hormones that will help with post natal bleeding, mood regulation, breast milk production and energy boosting.

I can also make your placenta into a tincture to be taken by you or your baby for years to come, create a beautiful tree of life artwork, have the cord dried into a heart or spiral shape keepsake (or dream catcher), and make a placenta balm infused with herbs and essential oils for many skin conditions.

Please see my website for more information and prices.
Virginia Maddock 0415683074 Virginia@naturalbeginnings.com.au
www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

THE NURTURED BEBE

For ten moons your placenta nourished, supported and grew your precious bebe. Once you have welcomed your bebe earthside, your placenta can still continue to nourish both of you. The most common benefits of placentophagy include;

- ~ Reduced risk of postpartum depression
 - ~ Increasing breastmilk supply
 - ~ Replenish iron stores
 - ~ Assisting recovery post-partum
 - ~ Reducing the length of postpartum bleeding
 - ~ Increasing general wellbeing in both mother and bebe
- I offer a variety of services including encapsulation, tinctures and salves as well as mementos such as artwork and dried cord keepsakes.
Alicia Langlands 0400684464
www.thenurturedbebe.com.au
info@thenurturedbebe.com.au

HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH PROGRAMS

BELMONT MIDWIFERY GROUP PRACTICE HOMEBIRTH PROGRAM

Our service provides individualised women centred continuity of care throughout pregnancy, birth and for two weeks postnatally.

Healthy women have the choice to birth at home if they are within 30 mins to our supporting hospital, John Hunter Hospital (New Lambton Heights in the Hunter/New England area).

For further information contact Jane Crosbie, Phone: 0428 112 192,
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-of-Belmont-Birthing>

ST GEORGE HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH SERVICE

This public health service is available to women in the St George and Sutherland Shire area. Continuity of care is provided by two midwives throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

For further information, call the Birth Centre on 029113 3103.

WOLLONGONG HOSPITAL HOMEBIRTH SERVICE

This public health service is available to women in the Helensburgh to Kiama region. Continuity of care is provided by two midwives throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. Contact the Antenatal Clinic on 0242534256 and ask to book in with the Midwifery Group Practice (MGP). Your details will be taken down and MGP will return your call.

BIRTHING SERVICES: MIDWIVES

Homebirth Access Sydney provides a list of midwives currently offering homebirth services in the Sydney area and a list of questions to ask when interviewing them on our website. Midwives are listed when they agree to sign up their clients for a year's membership of HAS. Listing does not imply endorsement by HAS.

ACORN MIDWIFERY : KATIE SULLIVAN

I am a midwife in private practice on the NSW Central Coast and have been a midwife for 10 years, having worked in continuity of care models for all of my clinical experience. I can tailor your care to your needs. Antenatal or postnatal care individually or as part of the suite of services including labour and birth at home. I am a placenta specialist certified to provide placenta encapsulation, placenta tinctures and placenta salves. I will travel to Newcastle/Hunter Valley/ Port Stephens and Upper North Shore/Northern Beaches area to work with women and their families.

Katie Sullivan: 0408614029 katie@acornmidwifery.com.au

BIRTH WITH GENTLE CHOICES

Offering continuity of midwifery care during pregnancy, birth and postnatally. Birth is a natural, and empowering experience that is part of a normal life journey rather than a medical event. Providing support for women and their families and encouragement to believe in herself and her ability to birth instinctively.

Betty Vella (Gynea) 9540 4992
bpvella@optushome.com.au

THE ELLA MAY CENTRE

[Midwives @ Sydney And Beyond]

The Ella May Centre provides an alternative to the medical management of fertility, pregnancy, birth and beyond by providing Midwifery and Naturopathic care to prospective and expecting families. Your midwife will provide you with individualised care throughout the preconception, pregnancy, birth and postnatal periods and is on call 24 hours a day.

The Ella May Centre supports you to birth in the way and place of your choosing.

For full details of services please visit our website or book a free information appointment.

Melanie Jackson (Western Suburbs & Blue Mountains) 0425 280 682
www.ellamaycentre.com

EMMA FITZPATRICK: MIDWIFE IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

[Midwives @ Sydney And Beyond]

With over 11 years experience in Midwifery, I am passionate about supporting women and their families throughout the journey of pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. As well as being a passionate Midwife I am mum to 3 children, my littlest recently being birthed at home in the water. I am located in the Hawkesbury, and happy to provide support and service to women in Western Sydney, The Hawkesbury and The Blue Mountains areas.

Emma Fitzpatrick (The Hawkesbury) 0432724103
emma_gu77@yahoo.com.au

HAZEL KEEDLE

Private midwife, antenatal, home birthing and postnatal care and placenta encapsulation covering the Central West, based near Orange, NSW 0408661503
hazelkeedle@gmail.com www.midwifehazel.com

IBIRTH - INTIMATE BIRTH & BEGINNINGS

[Midwives @ Sydney & Beyond]

My name is Janine O'Brien and I have been a midwife for over 10 years, committed in women centred care and providing a continuum of care to women and their families. I am the mother of two beautiful young women and have been practicing with Midwives@Sydney & Beyond since June 2013.

Servicing Northern Beaches, Sydney & surrounding suburbs.
Janine O'Brien 0422 969 961
janine@ibirth.com.au www.ibirth.com.au

JO HUNTER : HOMEBIRTH MIDWIFE

I believe that women should be placed at the centre of their own experience, supported to empower themselves with knowledge and skills, given time and encouragement from their midwife, as well as being surrounded by those they love and people who believe and trust in their ability to birth. It is the midwives role to have patience and trust in the innate ability of women and babies and to be comfortable and confident to support this process in any setting the woman chooses. Pregnancy, birth and postnatal care up to 6 weeks is provided in your home. I live in The Blue Mountains and service local families, inner west and western Sydney.

Jo Hunter (Blue Mountains, Inner west and Western Sydney)
(02) 47519840 midwifejo@bigpond.com www.midwifejo.com.au

NEW BEGINNINGS MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

[Midwives @ Sydney and Beyond]

New Beginnings Midwifery Practice offers a personalised approach to pregnancy, birth and beyond. Receive comprehensive prenatal care with your own midwife. New Beginnings can assist you with homebirth, hospital birth or birth centre birth. Extensive postnatal visits. Access to information, resources and a large lending library. Care and support available 24 hours a day.

Robyn Dempsey (North Ryde) 9888 7829

midwiferyrobyn@optusnet.com.au www.homebirthmidwives.com.au

PREGNANCY , BIRTH & BEYOND

[Midwives @ Sydney and Beyond]

Looking for special care during your pregnancy, birth and as new parents? Receive personalised, professional care by an experienced midwife. Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond supports women and their families birthing at home, birth centre or hospital. Midwifery care helps you avoid unnecessary interventions and to be recognised as the most important member of the birth team. Pregnancy, Birth and Beyond aims to assist families achieve an empowering birth experience. For full details of services please visit our website.

Jane Palmer (Dundas Valley) 9873 1750

jane@pregnancy.com.au www.pregnancy.com.au

SHERYL SIDERY

Hi my name is Sheryl, I live on the northern beaches and have been in private practice for over 23 years. I believe that pregnancy and birth is a transformative process that is essential for mothering. I cover the northern beaches, eastern suburbs and the inner west. Having Medicare eligibility provides women with a rebate for some of their pre and postnatal care.

Sheryl Sidery 0409760548

secretwomensbiz@bigpond.com www.sherylsidery.com

TANYA MUNTEN

Having trust in the normal process of birth is Tanya's foundation for her midwifery practice along with the understanding that every pregnancy, birth and pathway into parenthood is a unique and profound life experience.

As an eligible Independent midwife from Sydney's Northern Beaches Tanya is able to provide a medicare rebate for your antenatal and postnatal care for up to 6 wks after the birth of you baby.

All visit take place in your home at a time that suits. Areas covered are Sydney's Northern beaches, Nth Shore & Eastern Suburbs.

Tanya Munten 0412 210 222

tanyamunten@hotmail.com www.tanyamunten.com.au

WITH WOMAN MIDWIFERY CARE

I am an independent midwife based in Shellharbour. I provide continuity of midwifery care throughout pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period to women planning to birth at home. All visits take place in the woman's home at a time that suits the family. Areas covered include the Illawarra, Southern Highlands, Southern Sydney, Shoalhaven and Canberra.

Rachele Meredith 0421 721 497

rachele@withwoman.com.au www.withwoman.com.au

GUIDE TO CHOOSING A MIDWIFE

For a downloadable list of these questions to ask your midwife, please go to the 'Find A Midwife' page on our website.

Different midwives have different personalities and practices, and different responsibility. When selecting your midwife, we recommend you:

- Interview as many midwives as you can from different practices
- Talk to as many of their clients as you can

Here are some questions you might consider asking midwives you are considering for your care:

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Are you registered?
- How long have you been practising?
- Where did you train and when?
- Do you do regular continuing education? What about refresher courses and extra skills courses?
- Have you had any long periods away from practice? If so, what did you do to update your skills and knowledge?
- Do you have regular peer review of your midwifery practice?
- Did you work in a hospital setting and then become a homebirth midwife? When?
- Do you combine hospital shift work and a homebirth practice?
- How many births have you attended as primary caregiver?
- How many of these were at hospital? In a birth centre? At home?
- How many births per year and per month do you attend?
- Do you have a specialty area of practice?
- What is your rate of transfer to hospital? Rate of caesarean section? Rate of assisted delivery?
- Have you ever had to resuscitate a baby?
- Has a baby ever died under your care? What were the circumstances?
- Are you certified in neonatal resuscitation? Do you carry oxygen to the birth?

ELIGIBILITY

- Are you registered as an eligible midwife?
- Can I claim Medicare for pre and post natal services?
- How much will I get back from Medicare per visit?
- Can you prescribe antibiotics, vitamin K etc?
- Do you have a collaborative relationship with a GP or obstetrician?
- Do you have midwife visiting rights to my local hospital?

PHILOSOPHY AND ATTITUDE

- Why did you become a midwife?
- What do you perceive your role to be - during my pregnancy, during my labour, after the baby is born? How does your practice vary for different women?
- Do you see yourself as actively involved in a woman's labour? How? (Some midwives prefer to sit back and let you do it with your birth support people, others will become actively involved if you want that and talk to you, massage, hold heat packs)
- What is your attitude to complementary therapies such as homeopathics, acupuncture, etc
- What is your attitude to circumcision? Immunisation?
- What do you expect regarding self-care during pregnancy?
- What is your view on nutrition and weight gain during pregnancy?

COLLABORATION /TEAM

- Will you provide all my midwifery care or will others be involved?
- What are your back-up arrangements if you are not available to provide my care? Do you work with a regular second midwife?
- If you work alone, what happens if two women go into labour at the same time? What is your backup system? If you work with other midwives, when can I meet them?
- Are there any collaboration requirements with doctors, obstetricians or others? Do you have any collaboration agreements? If so, with whom? Please explain how these will work, how the team collaborates and how much each element will cost. How does collaboration affect my care and specifically continuity of care? When will I meet these people?
- Who will you bring with you to the birth?
- What is your experience of working with doulas? Do you prefer a woman to have a doula at birth? Do you have any doulas with whom you regularly work?
- What will happen if I need to see a specialist during my pregnancy or labour?
- What will happen if my baby needs to see a specialist?
- In what circumstances would you recommend my baby see a pediatrician or doctor?

PRACTICAL MATTERS

- Legal, contractual, financial
- What do you charge for your services and what does that cover? Is it a lump sum or segmented for different phases of care? Will there be a written contract?
- When do you expect payment? Is there flexibility?
- What rebates are available?
- What happens if we discontinue our relationship during my pregnancy? For example, if I don't want you to be my midwife anymore, if there is a medical situation that recommends against my having a homebirth, or if you are unwilling or unable to continue my care? Will you refer me? How will the finances work?
- Please explain the current situation regarding professional indemnity insurance and how it affects my care or our relationship.

TIMING

- What happens if two clients are in labor at the same time? How many clients do you have due around the same time as me? Will you take on more?
- Do you combine hospital shift work and a homebirth practice? What if you're working when I am in labour?
- Are you likely to be away when my baby is due?

SPECIFIC ISSUES.....DURING PREGNANCY

- Where will the prenatal appointments be? What do they include? How long will they take? How many antenatal visits do you recommend, and why?
- How and when can I contact you if I need help or advice during the come up between visits?
- In what circumstances would you transfer me to obstetrical care for during pregnancy? What is your rate of prenatal transfer?
- What is your attitude to 'due dates' and how would you feel about my pregnancy going over 40 weeks? What would your advice be?
- How do you feel about natural induction methods? Can you offer any of these services?
- What would you do in the case that I was having twins? Had a breech baby?
- What prenatal tests do you require? What do you recommend? Do you have an obstetrician to whom you refer?
- Do you provide education as I prepare for the birth? Do you have a lending library of books/DVDs?

DURING LABOUR AND BIRTH

- In what circumstances do you recommend transfer to hospital? How often do your clients transfer and for what reasons? Do you stay with your clients who transfer? In what capacity?
- Do I need a backup booking with the hospital? Which one? What is involved in this? If it's a private hospital, do I need private health insurance?
- What equipment do you provide (eg birth pool)? What must I provide?
- How and how regularly will you monitor the baby during labour?
- Do you support me labouring in water? Birthing in water?
- What do you do in the event of a long labor? A "stalled" labor? Do you stay? Go away and come back? In what circumstances?
- When will you come to me after I begin labor? Have you ever missed a birth?
- How often do you perform an episiotomy?
- What is your attitude towards premature rupture of membranes (PROM)?
- How long do you wait to cut the cord after the baby is born?
- Do you support lotus birth?
- What do you do if there is a post partum hemorrhage?
- What procedures do you perform immediately on the newborn? What can wait? Will you wait if I request it?
- How long will you stay after I give birth?

DURING THE POSTNATAL PERIOD

- What is the schedule of post-natal visits? Where will they be? What do they include? How long will they take?
- Will you help me with breastfeeding? If so for how many weeks?
- How do I get my baby's birth certificate?

HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUPS

Sydney & NSW

EASTERN SUBURBS HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUP

3rd Wednesday of every month

Time: 10.00-12.00

Location: Clovelly

Contact: Nadine Fragosa 0468 382 580 or nads@jonads.com

Please feel welcome to join us if you're pregnant, have children or are just curious about home birthing.

INNER WEST HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUP

First Tuesday of Every Month

Time: 10am - 12pm

Location: changes every month, so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0410 139 907

Please feel welcome if you're pregnant, have children or are just curious about home birthing. Partners welcome too!

(Search for Sydney Inner West Homebirth Group on Facebook!)

NORTHERN BEACHES HOME BIRTH GROUP

NEW Weekly Meeting *starting September 24th*

Last Thursday of the month

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: 12 Collaroy St Collaroy

Contact: Jenna Richards with any questions 0476 197 683

Please bring snacks to share and keep in mind this is a NUT FREE event as some families have allergies.

SUTHERLAND SHIRE HOME BIRTH GROUP

Every Thursday

Time: 10.30am weekly

Location: 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah.

Contact: Virginia 0415683074 or maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

If you're pregnant or have babies or kids in tow, come on over, let the kids run amok and enjoy a cuppa and some fresh baked delights with some like-minded mamas.

PREGNANCY & PARENTING NETWORK MEETING - DUNDAS VALLEY

1st Thursday of the month

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Jane Palmer's home: 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.

Contact: Jane Palmer 1300 MIDWYF (1300 643 993)

jane@pregnancy.com.au

Dates and Topics:

Info: <http://www.pregnancy.com.au/resources/support-groups/index.shtml>

Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

PREGNANCY & PARENTING NETWORK MEETING - BLUE MOUNTAINS

3rd Tuesday of the month

Time: 9.30 - 11am

Location: Cafe 2773 Ross St Glenbrook.

Contact: Melanie: 0425 280 682 mkjackson@live.com.au

Dates / Topics:

Info: <http://www.ellamaycentre.com/Events.html>

As always, mums, dads, friends and kids are all welcome! See you there!

ILLAWARRA BIRTH CHOICES GROUP

3rd Monday of each month

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.

Contact: info@birthchoices.info

BLUE MOUNTAINS HOME BIRTH SUPPORT GROUP

Every 2nd Thursday

Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Lawson Family Day Care room, unless otherwise specified!

Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.

Contacts: email Krystal: bmhomebirth@gmail.com or visit our

website <http://www.bluemountainshomebirth.com.au/>

To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings / topics please email Krystal.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway.

No meetings in school holidays

MOTHERS & MIDWIVES OF THE SOUTH (SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS)

Every month

For more details contact Kylie Woods: 486801691 / 0416204424 or candlebark@hotmail.com.

Everyone welcome!

CENTRAL COAST HOME BIRTH GROUP

1st Wednesday of each month

Time: 10.30-12.30

Location: Various venues in group members' homes

Contact: Lisa Richards bellabirthing@live.com.au

Come along if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, mums, dads, kids, doulas, midwives, and anyone interested in homebirth (including homebirth & hospital transfers).

HUNTER HOME & NATURAL BIRTH SUPPORT (HHNBS)

Email hhnbsgroup@gmail.com with enquiries or to join our mailing list.

You can also find us on Facebook- Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support Group, <https://www.facebook.com/HHNBS>

ARMIDALE & DISTRICT HOME BIRTH SUPPORT NETWORK

1st Sunday of every month

Contact: Rebecca Pezzutti hbsarmidale@gmail.com

CENTRAL WEST BETTER BIRTH GROUP

1st Friday of the month

Location: Various homes around Orange and Central West, NSW.

Contact: Hazel Keedle. Ph: 0408661503

Informing, supporting and empowering women in their birth choices. (Search for Central West Better Birth Group on Facebook!)

Interstate & National

HOME BIRTH AUSTRALIA

Contact: Chris Wrightson 0414 812 144 Homebirth@gmail.com

www.homebirthaustralia.org

HOME BIRTH QUEENSLAND INC.

Contact: 07) 3839 5883 info@homebirth.org.au

www.homebirth.org.au

ALICE SPRINGS HOME BIRTH GROUP

Contact: Ann Yffer 0402 424 780 wildisha@gmail.com

DARWIN HOME BIRTH GROUP

Contact: Justine Wickham 0438 888 755 dhbginfo@gmail.com

www.darwinhomebirthgroup.org.au

HOME BIRTH NETWORK OF SA

PO Box 275, Seaford, SA 5169

Contact: Clair at admin@homebirthsa.org.au

www.homebirthsa.org.au

HOME BIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY (INC)

- 1) To create an awareness in the community of planned attended homebirth as an accessible and attainable alternative and to be actively involved in maintaining homebirth as a choice and improvement of conditions for homebirthers. In the interest of furthering the cause of homebirth, our public relations policy will be one of assertive, non-aggressive approach.
- 2) To provide an information and referral service by way of newsletters, pamphlets, telephone contacts, a permanent mailbox, a reference library and regular public meetings.
- 3) To provide support to HAS members by holding regular public meetings and maintaining and publicising a list of contact phone numbers and addresses.
- 4) To represent HAS members on or to any regulatory or advisory body, Local, State or Federal, which is formulating policy or implementing decisions which affect homebirth.
- 5) To work with other homebirth groups and other groups concerned with birthing to further the aims of HAS.
- 6) To be involved in public gatherings that are relevant to and consistent with HAS' aim regarding homebirth.

YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND

Homebirth Access Sydney (HAS) Committee Meetings

Meetings are generally held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at venues TBA, but dates are subject to late changes according to availability of attendees.

Please contact Virginia on 0415683074 or email info@homebirthsydney.org.au for submissions and agenda confirmation.

All welcome, including children!

HAS POLICY STATEMENT

This policy statement was written because of the need to promote unity and understanding among our homebirth members and the wider community.

- 1) Homebirth Access Sydney is an organization which was established in 1973 to provide information and support to those interested in homebirth our members include parents, birth attendants, educators and midwives.
- 2) HAS recognises that Australian families have the right to have their baby in any setting – be it their home, a clinic, a birth centre or a hospital.
- 3) The members of HAS believe that home is a safe place to give birth and that there will always be an element of risk in birth whatever the choice of birth place.
- 4) Families who choose homebirth are taking a shared responsibility in the births of their babies. They are opting for a birth outside of an institution and its model of mass health care which is restrictive and frequently denies individuals requirements.
- 5) The midwives who attend homebirths are specialists, educated to provide total care throughout pregnancy, labour and the post-natal period. They consult with other health practitioners when appropriate.
- 6) Midwives are accountable to their clients and their peers (through quality assurance and standards review) as well as the Dept. of Health, the Nurses Registration Board, the Australian College of Midwives and the various courts.
- 7) With the widespread misconceptions about the safety of homebirth, a homebirth midwife's professional status is in jeopardy whenever anything goes wrong. However skilled she may be, deregistration and loss of career is a constant insecurity in the face of social hostility to her chosen profession.
- 8) Birth is an intense, emotional, life changing experience. In the event of conflict or unresolved issues, HAS encourages mediation and conciliation between all parties whatever the birth place and whoever the birth attendants.

MAGAZINE ADVERTISING RATES		
	Single (1 Issue)	Annual (4 issues)
Service Pages		
Services Listing	n/a	\$35
Advertisements		
Business Card Display	\$20	\$70
Quarter Page Display	\$30	\$110
Half Page Display	\$40	\$150
Full Page Display	\$65	\$250

For print and online advertising please email Serene Johnson advertising@homebirthsydney.org.au

HAS ABN 75 947 458 113

HAS MISSION STATEMENT

Homebirth Access Sydney is a viable and visible organisation working with integrity to support mothers and families' rights to informed and empowered home birth.

The topic for the next issue of Birthings is:

BIRTH ART



Birthings is your magazine. We would love you to contribute!

The Summer 2015 issue is all about Birth Art. This is a juicy, creative issue and we would love to include all of your photos and articles about birth art. Of course, we would also love your birth stories and anything Birthings related!

Submissions are due by November 1st, 2015.
Please check our submission guidelines on page 2 and don't forget a bio!

Email the Editor at editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

REMINDER: Please ensure that we have your correct email address so you can receive membership expiry reminders as well as our newsletter. If you have recently moved, please send us your new address: member@homebirthsydney.org.au