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Spring 2011 Issue 111

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BIRTHINGS

A HOMEBIRTH ACCESS SYDNEY QUARTERLY PUBLICATION

Gender

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

www.homebirthsydney.org.au

Spring 2011 – Issue 111

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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 Virginia Maddock at editor@homebirthsydney.org.au
Photos and written submissions must be emailed. Prior notice to the Editors of your intention to submit work is not necessary, but can be helpful in planning content.

DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Summer 2011	No. 112	1 November 2011
Autumn 2012	No. 113	1 February 2012
Winter 2012	No. 114	1 May 2012
Spring 2012	No. 115	1 August 2012

BACK ISSUES Back issues of Birthings are like hen's teeth! But we will try to accommodate requests. Back issues cost \$4.00 – \$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 give an insight into the homebirth movement and HAS activities.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS Please notify any change of address to HAS, PO Box 66, Broadway, NSW 2007 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 a set of contribution guidelines. We also work with an editorial board, selected by the HAS executive, to reflect the range of people in our community. The founding board members are Maggie Lecky-Thompson, Adrienne Abulhawa, Jo Hunter, Sarah McLean and the current editor, 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. As a guideline, most birth stories work best when they are under 1200 words. Submissions on the theme should be under 1700 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. We will include as many as we can to illustrate your story.

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 sent to Virginia Maddock 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.

With thanks to our postage sponsor


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FRONT COVER



Babies in order from top left (clockwise): Mia Allen, Rowan Fabb, Tya McMahon, Tor Kenyon, Mia Rose Wong and Nikolai McGilchrist. Photo courtesy of Peaches & Cream Photography.

BACK COVER



Archie, Oscar and Erin Mirigliani. Photo courtesy of their Mum Charmaine.

Editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of Birthings: 'Gender'. I am aware that the specific definition of 'gender' refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours and activities that society considers appropriate for males and females; whereas 'sex' refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define males and females. But as we already have a past issue theme of 'Sex' [issue 101] which was more to do with the physical act, I have named it 'Gender' but have equally encompassed both meanings within that word.

I was a little worried when I chose this theme that I may not get many submissions. But I have been pleasantly surprised, if not overwhelmed, with the interest given and contributions made by our lovely members. So I am proud to introduce another jam packed issue with eight gender themed articles, fifteen birth announcements, seven birth stories (coincidentally all are of boys!) and lots of letters.

Amongst our theme articles there are a couple of stories of families with all of the one gender which perfectly suited them, who found that others were more intent on them having a baby of the opposite gender than they themselves were. We have one mother's memories of when she chose to not find out the gender of her babies during pregnancy and why; musings of a pregnant woman who does not know what gender her baby is currently; a heart wrenching piece from the mother of a baby girl who had previously lost her own mother to cancer; a sensitively written article from a lesbian who always imagined having a boy, then after numerous miscarriages, had two girls instead; as well as the documentation of my own journey using the 'Shettles Method' of natural gender selection.

Being very pregnant, I am so often asked "Do you know what you're having?" to which I usually reply "Human... (I hope!)". It is such a big question and leaves the imagination wide open as to looks, personality, and life direction my child may take, according to what is between its legs. The moments following birth will be the revelation of a big surprise and some of that detail may be assumed when I find out (or not!), while others will be filled in as the baby grows and we get to know its personality.

Recently there emerged a story of a couple in Canada who, after the birth of their baby, chose to keep its gender a secret from everyone but their own immediate family. They felt strongly that they did not want society to label or pigeonhole their child by treating them as either male or female, and they had already let their older boy children choose their own gender path, including letting them choose whatever they wanted to wear, which included pink frilly dresses! You can make up your own mind on whether this is too extreme or not. Personally, I think it's going a little overboard and does remind me of one of my favourite Australian movies: 'The Rage in Placid Lake', featuring Ben Lee who plays a child of hippy parents who send him to school in a dress on the first day of kindergarten to challenge gender stereotypes, which results in him getting bullied and beaten up for the rest of his school life. So I wonder if this family will be unnecessarily exposing their kids to this potentiality. (Don't get me wrong, I am all for challenging gender stereotypes – after all, I was a sponsored skateboarder in my younger days, in a sport that was very male dominated. I remember being told early on that girls shouldn't skate because we should look pretty and keep our legs free of scabs and scars!!!)

On the other end of the scale, I was at a playgroup a few weeks ago, and there was a little boy who started to play with the pink toy kitchen there. To my astonishment, his mother redirected him to a box full of cars, saying that "boys don't play with kitchens" – hmmm,



VIRGINIA
MADDOCK

a very different parenting outlook to my natural parenting 'sistas' at homebirth group!

With my own son Jetsun, I know that his favourite toys and fixations are anything to do with trucks, diggers and tractors; and if he's awake early enough, he gets so excited seeing the "bin truck" on a Thursday morning. It is not something I ever pushed him towards because he's a boy, it just happened naturally. On the other hand, when we stayed at my mother in-law's in New Zealand, I could see that he loved playing with her toy kitchen, so this is what we bought him for his second birthday, complete with kid sized pans, cooking utensils and toy food. I also arranged for my sister to buy him a tea set, and he just loves pretending to cook and serve tea - something most parents would usually only bestow upon their girls. At least if I have a girl next, she will hopefully be just as balanced by playing with Jetsun's trucks (and my skateboard!).

I am not averse to him wearing the odd item of pink either, though it is not something I would actively search out, nor would I go out and buy him a dress or very 'girly' clothes! I bought him second-hand pink gumboots as they were the only ones I could find which were not emblazoned with TV or movie characters (which was more important to me than colour), and they go perfectly with a funky navy cap that has pink underneath the peak, which a friend of mine made for her girl before she outgrew it and it was passed along to him. He also has a pink dressing gown, handed down to him from his older cousin, and a pink art smock, because it was the only colour available in the shop when I bought it. I don't particularly like the colour myself, and find that the girls' clothes and toys sections of department stores are sickeningly singularly toned with the colour, which I find rather offensive, but I hope to give my son a bit of balance in a 'pink is for girls' and 'blue is for boys' kind of world. So to sum up, the most important thing for me is to not withhold anything, push anything onto him or sway his opinion one way or the other, but let him do and be what makes him happy, regardless of gender leanings.

Next edition is on the theme of 'Siblings' and we hope you will contribute. This could be about older siblings' reactions and feelings to your pregnancy and growing belly, the way you prepared your older children for a new baby, siblings during birth, siblings adjusting to their new brother or sister, tandem feeding etc. We also look forward to receiving your letters (and thanks to our sponsors and advertisers, we now award a prize for best letter!), birth announcements, birth stories, photos, art and poetry. Email to: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au.

HAS would like to thank the generosity of the following people for our lovely cover photo for this issue: Sandy Bucknell and Brian Nicholson from 'Peaches and Cream Photography', for donating their time and skills in shooting the photo. And the families of all 6 babies for giving up their Saturday morning to travel to Centennial Park, and entrusting us to capture their gorgeous essence on camera. Their Mums are – Rebecca Chapman, Naomi Hovel, Tania McMahon, Elizabeth Kenyon, Beryl Truong and Connie McGilchrist. (Baby names are listed on the contents page).

Letters to the Editor

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

This issue, our best letter prize goes to Chrissy Grainger. Chrissy has won 2 books: 'Heart to Heart Parenting' by Robin Grille and 'Chemical Maze Pocket Edition' by Bill Statham, which has been generously donated by our sponsorship coordinator Leanne Clarke and her business Southside Psychology, which also sponsors our stationery. Your books are on the way Chrissy. Send your letters to editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

11 July, 2011

Dear Editor,

I was quite surprised to read the last letter to the editor about 'Name Withheld's concern about unassisted birth. I believe that all readers of Birthings understand the difference between unassisted birth at home, and homebirth with a midwife - confusion isn't an issue if you ask me. I believe unassisted birth to be a valid choice for women and their families to make. Not all unassisted birthers choose this option because they have been backed into a corner and left with no 'real' choice. Many choose it as a matter of necessity. With the numerous unplanned unassisted births that have previously occurred in my local area, I think it would be irresponsible for women not to investigate an unassisted birth as an option, and be at least slightly prepared for it. I believe it is essential, particularly during this time of political upheaval surrounding homebirth, that we do not segregate and turn against our fellow homebirthers. Women that choose to birth unassisted completely investigate, research and take absolute full responsibility for the health and welfare of their bodies and babies, as do women who choose to birth under the care of midwives at home. I would also like to say as a Birthings subscriber, I hope to see more unassisted birth stories being published and I agree wholeheartedly with Virginia's response. Risk is in the eye of the beholder and none of us can judge anyone else for making a decision that we would not be comfortable with. Just to clarify I have birthed in hospital and at home under the care of midwives.

What wonderful articles and birth stories Birthings has published so far this year!!! I meant to write in and say how much I enjoyed the 'Safety and Risk' issue but time got away from me. I absolutely enjoyed the twin homebirth stories and hope to read more of these in future Birthings issues.

I can't wait to read the Gender issue. Having 3 boys I am constantly hearing comments such as "I bet you're hoping your next is a girl", "No family is complete without a little girl. Will you be trying for a girl next time?", or my favourite "I bet you will keep having babies until you have a girl to finish your family". I look forward to reading of other's experiences with Gender. Thanks to everyone that keeps Birthings in our letterboxes. What a great effort.

Yours sincerely,

Chrissy Grainger

Coordinator Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support

11/7/2011

Thank you HAS and your fabulous magazine Birthings where I first found my awesome (then) doula and now midwife. 11 days ago we had such an empowering home waterbirth to our first son after three daughters. There truly is no place like home!!!

Lorelei Barkley

24/06/2011

Dear Virginia,

I just wanted to say how BEAUTIFUL the cover was for Birthings. And you look so beautiful on the back. The magazine looks so professional. You and your team have done an outstanding job. You must be getting close. Thinking of you as you move towards meeting your next little one.

Love, Regina [Power]

30/6/11

Thanks for the awesome job you do with the Birthings mag. I love it so much and love reading all the beautiful positive stories. May see you at the conference if my babe hasn't come yet.

Hugs x Rachel Prest

23/6/11

Hi Virginia!

Loved seeing Eli's birth announcement in the magazine, thank you for fitting in all the "thank you's", and I must say that is a gorgeous pic of you on the back too!

Amantha McGuiness



25/7/11

Hi there!

My daughter Ella, 11 months is a water home-birth baby. She loves looking at and pointing to the 'bubbas' in my Birthings magazines!

Warm regards, Michelle Carruthers.

29/7/11

The Editor

These many years after we first formed a homebirth referral service in 1976 that evolved into HAS I still read the magazine as soon as it arrives! I wonder how many of today's members will be doing that in 2046?

My years involved with "childbirth activism" have given me life long friends and the gifts of being at the births of my grandchildren as well as a passion for challenging systems that don't serve us as women or families.

My local Central Coast newspapers always reports babies who are born in taxis or in a dash to the hospital etc never a planned homebirth but this article I was pleased to read, especially as I have RH neg blood. I think Mr Harrison is worth a mention in our magazine. I did write him a personal note of thanks.

Elaine Odgers Norling
HAS Honorary Life and Founding Member

1/8/11

Dear Ed,

I just wanted to say how fantastic the mag is looking! The last issue was my third and it's just come on so far. Well done!!

Kim

Blood donor helps save babies' lives

JAMES Harrison, of Umina Beach, has notched up 1000 plasma donations and helped save the lives of more than two million babies along the way.



Mr Harrison (pictured) has a rare type of blood plasma which is used to make lifesaving injections given to mothers whose blood is at risk of attacking, and killing, their unborn babies.

He made his 1000th donation at Sydney's Town Hall last week and has put the challenge out to the Australian community to beat his record.

"I hope this is a record that somebody breaks, because it will mean they are dedicated to the cause," he said.

A blood donor since 1954, Mr Harrison was accompanied to the milestone donation by his grandson Scott, who has just turned 16 and gave his first donation at the same time.

Around 17 per cent of women in Australia require the Anti D which Mr Harrison's blood can provide and every batch of Anti D ever made in Australia has some of his blood in it.

The Blood Service has echoed Mr Harrison's call for more male donors to follow in his footsteps.

Book an appointment to give blood on 131 495.

Contributors

AKAL KHALSA has been attending women at home in Sydney since 1979. She first started attending homebirth while living in Toronto Canada in the mid 1970's. Both of her children were born at home. Now, due to circumstances beyond her control, she has decided on an earlier than intended retirement.

AMY DAVIDSON is a busy mum of 4 boys and 1 girl, aged 6 and under. Amy and her husband Mark, own and run a hair salon in Richmond NSW. After 4 very handsome young men, Mark and Amy recently gave birth to a beautiful little princess at home. Amy is training as a breastfeeding counsellor with the Australian Breastfeeding Association and loves promoting and normalising the naturalness of birth and child rearing.

BRONWYN KIRKPATRICK and **GARY CAGANOFF** are Mum and Dad to Alina 4 and Edan 5 months. Bronwyn is a musician, Gary is a film maker and together they like hanging out in their garden, looking after the vegies and the chooks.

BRONWYN HALL lives with her partner Gareth in the beautiful Blue Mountains with their new son Odin Orion Houghton (born 23/04/11) and their massive Alaskan Malamute Fenris. Odin's arrival wasn't quite what they expected, yet still an amazing experience. Bronwyn is a drug and alcohol worker and counsellor whose passion is working with women with children.

DONNA EDWARDS, happy mama of four gorgeous blessings, homebirther, homeschooler, doula, rural dwelling, adoring wife and enjoying the challenges and beauties of each day.

ELIZABETH KENYON is a full-time mum who lives in the Inner West of Sydney with her husband and 3 young children. Her 2 youngest were home birthed.

FLEUR MAGICK is an Aboriginal woman descended from the Wiradjuri and Ngemba peoples and has been raised learning about Aboriginal culture all her life. Fleur has relearnt her Wiradjuri language as an adult and has been part of helping to revive the language in community, schools and family. She also performs and teaches Aboriginal dance, particularly Wiradjuri women's dance, and is a founding member of the organisation Aboriginal Cultural Birthing and Parenting.

KATHARINA LOGAN lives in Sydney's eastern suburbs with English husband Andrew and three month old son Isambard. Homebirth has been the plan since before Kat planned to have children, and Izzy's birth at home in water was beyond anything she could have expected. Kat is a writer, editor and something of a social historian, and hopes to embark on some freelance writing and editing from home in future, in addition to writing and researching for a novel in the pipeline.

KIM RYDER lives with her partner Karl and her fairly-new-to-the-world homebirth bubba Treya, on the central coast. Kim surprised herself with her choice to homebirth, previously thinking she'd take the painless option of an epidural. Needless to say, she is extremely thankful that she "wised up". Kim and Karl fell pregnant without even consciously trying, before embarking on a 5 month 'round Oz trip 4WDing! She is a qualified alcohol and other drugs worker and educator, and has worked as a community artist. In her now somewhat limited spare time, Kim likes to paint and photograph.

NAOMI HOMEL is 30 and lives in the inner west of Sydney with her husband Richard and her two beautiful boys; Lewis 2 and Rowan 4 weeks. Naomi returned to Australia in 2008 after living in the UK where she met Richard. She is a TV producer but is currently a busy and contented full time mum.

Despite two degrees, **TANYA KARLIYCHUK** still isn't sure what it means to be a girl. Professionally her work supports some of the most marginalised women in developing countries, yet she can't help but wonder why we don't involve more men in this endeavour. Tanya is currently indulging in the beauty of pregnancy and has found this uniquely feminine time an incredibly powerful exposé of women's place in society.

VIRGINIA MADDOCK is Birthings editor, HAS coordinator and runs the St George / Sutherland Shire homebirth group at her place in Caringbah every Thursday. She is also a doula, herbalist and nutritionist, and is passionate about natural fertility, birth and parenting. Virginia loves her kiwi fiancé Dan, loves being a stay at home Mum to her 2 1/2 year old son Jetsun and 13 1/2 year old Burmese cat Yin Yin, and will be birthing another baby at home in the Spring. www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

YVETTE BARTON is a single parent of two girls – Finlay 6 yrs and Charlie 6 mths. She has a Bachelor of Education and currently works as a freelance writer and editor while studying a Higher Diploma of Professional Publishing. Yvette is a fierce advocate for homebirth, women's rights to choose where they labour and birth, and midwives' rights to attend birthing woman without governmental constraints. She is also an advocate for natural and adoptive breastfeeding, co-sleeping, baby wearing, conscious parenting, and child advocacy. Yvette lives in Sydney and is the new HAS secretary.

Membership

Homebirth Access Sydney is the only group of its kind in Sydney. It fills an extremely important function in providing a centrally organised group of caring people, gathering information and making it available to everyone who is interested in childbirth alternatives and the myriad related issues.

Please support this vital work by subscribing to birthings

- 3 year membership: \$90
- 1 year membership: \$40
- Midwives subscribing clients: \$20 per client

Membership entitles you to receive Birthings four times a year and satisfaction in knowing that your money is being used to keep the group alive in order to make it easier for families to birth at home.

Please deposit correct money into our bank account:

Homebirth Access Sydney, BSB: 062 257, Acc #: 1017 2779

and email your details (as below) with receipt number to member@homebirthsydney.org.au, or send your completed form with cheque or money order to HAS, PO Box 66, Broadway, NSW 2007

*Name

*Address

*Telephone:

*Email:

Occupation:

Can you volunteer help?

(Typing, fundraising, emailing, events, organising etc.)

Please tick: New member Renewal Email receipt required

Please enclose: \$90 for 3-year membership

\$40 for 1-year membership

\$15 for midwife client membership (1-year)

Midwife's name:

*NOTE: REQUIRED ENTRY FOR OUR DATABASE.

For receipt request and enquiries: member@homebirthsydney.org.au

Coordinator's Report

VIRGINIA MADDOCK

I have so much to report on since the last issue of Birthings that I am not quite sure where to start and unfortunately the majority of it is not good news. It seems the witch-hunt of independent midwives in this country is ramping up... and I naively thought it could not get much worse!

There was the case of a midwife in Western Australia who had restrictions put on her practice for merely taking on a VBAC client (who went on to birth with no complications as would be expected, with research showing that women with a prior caesarean are at no more risk of uterine rupture than a first time birthing mother!). This led to the creation of the 'Save HBAC in Australia' Facebook group and subsequent fan page by Naomi Waldron who highlighted her plight and got over 1000 'likers' in the first few days (and now numbers over 2500!). She has built momentum for the campaign to not only strive to have this midwife's restrictions lifted, but to campaign for every woman's right to have a midwife attend any homebirth after previous caesarean.

Not long after this happened, the Australian College of Midwives (ACM) released an 'Interim Homebirth Position Statement' and 'Interim Guidance for Privately Practising Midwives' in August. Unfortunately the college completely ignored the requests of the numerous organisations that protested the last Draft Homebirth Position Statement (released in May) and have still not gone with the 2009 version which had previously been agreed upon by all groups. They also incorrectly stated that it had been written in consultation with Homebirth Australia, Maternity Coalition and various private and independent midwives associations, when nothing could be further from the truth (unless consultation means in complete disagreement!). On initial reading of the homebirth position statement, it seems mostly positive in that it talks about a woman's right to give birth where she chooses. However it does make references to a woman's low risk status as being the ideal scenario to birth at home. This is where I began to question what their definition of low risk was. It is not until you read the accompanying 'Interim Guidance for Privately Practising Midwives' that the real alarm bells begin to ring, with midwives being told that:

"There are some contraindications to a planned homebirth which women should be informed of at booking. These are:

- Multiple pregnancy
- Abnormal presentation (including breech presentation)
- Preterm labour prior to 37 completed weeks of pregnancy
- Post term pregnancy of more than 42 completed weeks
- Scarred uterus"

This rules out the majority of homebirthing women (including myself who, having had a laparoscopy to remove a dermoid ovarian cyst, would have a scarred uterus, along with anyone who has had a prior caesarean. One midwife I have spoken to says that VBACs make up $\frac{3}{4}$ of her clientele!).

So effectively what the college is saying is that women have a right to birth where they choose, but absolutely no right to have a private midwife care for them if they fall outside these strict guidelines of risk, and there is no duty of care for midwives to attend them, either prenatally or during birth at home. Instead they are mandated to abandon them and refer them to an obstetrician or GP. So there goes any chance of having a normal natural birth at home, unless you have the confidence to go it alone and birth unattended (or hire an unregistered birth attendant)!

Please take the time to read these documents in detail yourself on the ACM website: www.midwives.org.au and email your comments to info@midwives.org.au by the 23rd September 2011. HAS will be submitting comment which I will provide a link to on our website and Facebook page once it is done.

Since these documents were published, Naomi Waldron from the 'Save HBAC in Australia' Facebook fan page did what I had been trying to do unsuccessfully in earlier months, and arranged a meeting of different consumer groups to discuss the situation and plan united actions to try and combat this assault on women's rights. So on Thursday 11th August a Skype teleconference was had with myself and the following people:

- Michelle Meares and Justine Caines from Home Birth Australia
- Sarah Kerr and Bruce Teakle from Maternity Coalition
- Janet Fraser and Kristin Cheeseman from Joyous Birth
- Naomi Waldron from 'Save HBAC in Australia' (fan page from Facebook)
- Lisa Barrett (traditional birth attendant from 'Homebirth: A Midwife Mutiny' blog)

Despite the difficulties with poor line connections, this meeting was very fruitful and plans were initiated to lobby for Duty of Care legislation which

would enshrine both a woman's right to choose her place of birth with a registered carer and a midwife's right to support a woman's choice; as well as organise a protest rally.

This protest will take place at the ACM Conference on Wednesday 19th October at Australia Technology Park in Eveleigh. Meet at 12pm at Marian Street Park Redfern (near Redfern station) then walk to the Australian Technology Park conference centre for a 12.30pm rally. This will coincide with the conference lunch break, which will then be followed by a talk by ACM president Tracy Martin giving an update on the College's activities. I would implore as many people as possible to attend so that we show them in large numbers that this is unacceptable.

The next day will be their Annual General Meeting. A good idea is to become a consumer member and show up to their AGM to push for changes to these statements and guidelines (and maybe a new homebirth friendly president!). It is much easier to make positive changes from within an organisation rather than from outside it!

The information I have found out in the meantime is that the 'Interim Homebirth Position Statement' has already been forwarded to the Nursing and Midwifery Board who have since published it on their website and endorsed it. It is outrageous that this has been done well before the deadline for comments and feedback has passed! We are hoping that by protesting, even if the position statement is set in stone, at least the more disagreeable 'Interim Guidance for Privately Practising Midwives' will be changed or dropped altogether.

One piece of good news is that The Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council (AHMAC) met and agreed to a further 12 month extension of the Professional Indemnity Exemption for Independent Privately Practising Midwives to 1st July 2013 "while further options are explored with a report back to the next Health Ministers meeting". This means that our fears of every homebirth with a midwife becoming illegal due to them having no professional indemnity insurance for the intrapartum period (ie. the birth) are allayed for another year. Then I guess we will be back in the same position same time next year!

At the time of writing, I have just returned from the 27th Annual Homebirth Australia Conference in Newcastle. And what a weekend it was, with inspiring speakers such as Ina May Gaskin and Robbie Davis Floyd to name a few. Please check out 'HAS In The Community' on pages 42 and 43 for more details and photos. I hear that next year it will be held in Tasmania so I am hoping to make it down for that.

The HAS Facebook page is growing by the day and is currently at almost 300 members. Let's keep up the momentum and share it around. It is great to have the opportunity to post and share home birth and natural parenting articles, as well as keep in better touch with our members and other like minded supporters.

Since last issue, we have had a couple of new volunteers and supporters. I would like to welcome our new secretary and calendar collator Yvette Barton, who has also written the article 'For Ethan' on pages 22 – 23, as well as our new stationery sponsor 'Southside Psychology' which is run by our fundraising and sponsorship coordinator Leanne Clarke. Thanks Yvette and Leanne.

Finally, I would like to extend a huge thanks to a couple of people – Sandy Bucknell, who is a close friend of mine, who not only helped with our lovely cover photo this issue, but has done a great job of taking over the distribution of the magazine. This has been way more complicated than you could ever imagine, needing hours of paper work and negotiating with Australia Post for a bulk print post discount to make it cheaper for our postage sponsor Nature's Child.

The other person is our magazine designer - 21 year old Leah White, who is a kiwi graphic design student, studying and living in Auckland, and puts in many hours of work in addition to her own university studies. (She came aboard through Sandy, whose brother is her partner). Her high standard of work is of someone far more experienced don't you think? These wonderful women are the unsung heroes of Birthings, without whom you would not have this magazine in your hands. I hope they know how appreciated they are!

Birth Announcements

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



Carla and Glenn Cromie, would belatedly like to announce the home waterbirths of their 2 beautiful sons, **Bowen Glenn** born 2.6.08 weighing 3.3Kg and then **Zach Zavier** born 8.8.10. also weighing 3.3Kg. They join big sister Taylah Skye (8yrs) and complete our family. We are forever blessed and thankful for our 3 special children, and the miraculous, safe, intervention free arrivals of our 2 sons will never cease to amaze and inspire us. Special thanks to our fabulous midwife Jacqui Wood who made it all possible.

Edan Bruce Caganoff, 3450 grams. Born 9.10pm on Valentine's Day, February 14th 2011 into Daddy's arms. Four hours first stage. 15 minutes second stage. Watched by Granny and big sister Alina. Thank you Sonja for your support!



On the 8th of March 2011, in the middle of the night, **Freya Frankie Pearl** was born into the water to join her mums Zenia and Bonnie, and slightly older sister Aureore, in the big wide wonderful world. It was an amazing thing, to birth, and then to birth at home. We are very happy to have shared it with lovely family Karen and Kelly, and wonderful friend and midwife Marissa - thank you! And to our truly amazing midwives Jane and Robyn, a very big thank you for making this all possible! What a wonderful way to spend International Women's Day!

Bronwyn and Gareth welcomed **Odin Orion** earthside on Saturday 23rd April 2011 at 5.01am, weighing 3.5kg and measuring 54cm. We are so grateful for the support of our doula Cara McDonald and midwife Hazel Keedle, as well as the amazing homebirth community in the Blue Mountains.

Rebecca Chapman and Richard Allen are thrilled to announce the birth of our daughter **Mia Jade Allen**, born at home in water on 29th April 2011 at 10.52pm, in the company of her dad and midwife Jo Hunter. She weighed 3.37kg. Big sister Sasha and brother Max, who were tucked up in bed asleep, were extremely disappointed to have missed the long-awaited birth but in the end (despite a long prelabour) it was too quick and intense. We are enjoying every minute of her. A huge thank you to Jo for taking us on and letting us have our second (and last!) beautiful homebirth.



Stephen and Jena are very happy to welcome **Liam Henry Morris**. Our beautiful boy was born 23rd May 2011 at Gosford Hospital after complications arose at home. We are very proud of our labour at home and so grateful to the people who supported us at Liam's birth: our wonderful midwife; our friend / doula Emma (who arrived just at the right moment) and our friend/ chiropractor, Lisa. We also thank God for giving us such an amazing, happy son.



Charmaine and Nick are pleased to announce the birth of **Erin Maria**, born on May 25th at 5.42am. It was a lovely home, waterbirth on a stormy, cold wintery morning. Her older brothers, Oscar and Archie, are just besotted with her. Many, many thanks to my wonderful midwife Nicole Greig from St George hospital homebirth program. I was so well taken care of during the birth, pregnancy and postnatal period. Thanks also to our second midwife Victoria who attended the birth as well. Erin is an absolute delight and we are so blessed to have her in our lives.



Alyssa Jade Yap wasn't going to wait around for daddy to fill the birthing pool! Our beautiful girl arrived after just 40 minutes of labour at 10.22pm on 13th June 2011. She was welcomed by her sister Kayla, brother Tallon, Mummy, Daddy, Nana, our midwife Jo Hunter and doula Tracey. She was 4.29kg and 53cm long. What an awesome journey this pregnancy and birth has been. Love you baby girl!



With much joy, Dean and Tania, big sister Tamara and big brother Oliver, welcome **Tya Nina McMahon**, born on the 18th June 2011 at 2:13 am, at 38 weeks - a beautiful birth on our family lounge room floor. Thank you to our supportive and calm midwife Jane Palmer. Tya is an absolute gem, and we just fall in love with her more and more every day.



John and Elizabeth Kenyon are overjoyed to announce the arrival of **Tor Delaney Kenyon**, born at home on Thursday 30th June 2011 at 7:25am. A healthy 3.71kg, he joins big sister, Rose and big brother, Leo.



Lorelei and Paul had a magical home waterbirth to welcome their first son **Zenon**. A lovely 4.82kg (59cm) baby boy was born on the 30th June after 2 hours of active labour. His three sisters are smitten and looking forward to playing dolls with him. Thanks to Jo Hunter our fantastic midwife for all her support along the way.



Welcome baby **Zara**. Born 1/7/11, weight: 3.97kg, length: 53cm. My dream team midwife Jo, whose maternal spirit and knowledge has been like sitting near a warm fire and my doula-student midwife Romany, who showed wisdom beyond her years, guiding me and then catching baby Zara in our birth pool. With all my heart, thank you both, for showing me what is possible. (Mandy, David, brother Max and Grandma).



Naomi, Richard and big brother Lewis welcome **Rowan Christopher Edward Fabb**. Born 8th July 2011 into water, at home surrounded by his Dad and two amazing midwives Tess Back and Sheryl Sidery. Surrounded by love. 4kg, 55cm. Waited till he was perfectly ready at 42 weeks. He is beautiful and perfect and we love him very much.



Kieran, Donna, Lily, Mirabelle and Aurora are excited to welcome our first son and little brother: **Zephaniah Simcha Edwards** - who was born joyfully at home in water after an intense 7 hour and 40 minute labour on Sunday 17th July 2011. All praise goes to Yehovah! And thanks to our lovely midwife Hazel and best friend Kathy for all their wonderful support!

Committee Member Profile:



KAREN
GALLAGHER

Joined: In 2010 when my beautiful midwife Hazel Keedle signed me up when I was pregnant with Aaliyah. I loved it when I first received my magazine, as it introduced me to a new community of people who shared my views on birth. I still look forward each quarter to having some 'me time', reading my issue of Birthings. I have just taken on the role of advertising coordinator for Birthings and very much enjoy doing something for the homebirth community.

Family: Husband Michael, and 3 daughters Ava 5yrs, Isla 3yrs and Aaliyah 15 months. Also an array of pets: Jack the dog, Loki and Pumpkin the cheeky cats, 4 chickens and Lily the duck.
Life before birthing: A party going, city living, fun girl and teacher.

Why homebirth? After my friend's experiences of unnecessary interventions at the local hospital, I decided to contact Hazel who I had met previously and had an instant connection with. She answered all mine and my husband's concerns thoughtfully. The experience of a homebirth was amazing - it was comfortable and calm. I experienced less intense pain, as with my other births, which I attribute to the water and knowing I could birth in my own time, without fear of unnecessary intervention.

Aboriginal Cultural Birthing and Parenting

Volunteer needed to help create Aboriginal Birthing website.

Aboriginal Cultural Birthing and Parenting is a grassroots organisation of Aboriginal women volunteers currently without funding. We are hoping to find someone to help us create a website which would need to include the facility to sell items from our site to assist with raising funds for our work in the community. If you are able to help please email me at : indymarra@hotmail.com

New and Renewed Members

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

Rebecca Zeus
Andrea Smith
Anna Johnston-Buckle
Carolyn Skipka
Verena Raschke-Cheema
Anastasia Davy
Lisa Vallett
Vanessa Winter
Joelle Skinner
Carolyn Skipka
Natasha Lu
Alicia Colley
Sarah Long
Teresa Springall
Lisa Andrusiak
Zdenka Novak
Emma Isaacs
Jennifer Lorange
Bashi Hazard
Sarah Gallo
Evonne Campo Romero
Nirrimi Hakanson
Vicaji Anderson
Alice Sun
Emma Fitzpatrick
Reenie Kuypers
Koreena Vumbaca
Sue Neale
Amanda Furber
Rebecca Knight
Sara Heritage
Sunshine Estivo
Amantha McGuinness
Jasmine Mostyn
Yves Warne-Smith
Ann Megalla
Zoe Wilson
Louise Underhill
Samantha Bowker
Rupinder Sharma
Melanie Dever
Sophie Hadlow
Imogen McKay
Tiffany Schaafsma
Tara Darlington



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www.australiandoulacollege.com.au**

You'll get what you



Years ago, a psychic told me my first child would be a boy. I can't say I was too impressed with that, as I hadn't yet decided whether I wanted children at all, let alone a boy with all his energy and intensity! But I dismissed it, in addition to the things she told me about my future husband, most of which came to be true.

My husband and I discussed our children's names on our first date, and back then it was all about the boys' names. We even agreed he'd choose the boys' names and I'd choose the girls'. But one day, as I sat researching his family history, I stumbled across an interesting name, one of his distant relations in a 19th century Scottish census record, and when I told my husband about it, he was very taken with it. We decided then and there, before we were even married, that we'd have a daughter and give her this name.

Time marched on and I fell pregnant within days of stopping birth control. I've never paid much attention to my cycle or ovulation, and I was very surprised to fall pregnant so quickly, four days after finishing the placebo week on the pill. I knew it was possible to ovulate at odd times during a cycle, that it doesn't always happen midway through, and I have a long 35 day cycle, so anything's possible there. I have no idea when I ovulated but I knew this baby had wanted to come for a long time and had waited for the first possible moment!

I kept an eye on my body, the various stages, morning sickness, weight gain, shape, size and location of my belly, and tried to pick up on whether I thought it was a boy or a girl. I didn't have a lot of morning sickness, not like my mum who had it up until the eighth month, but what did that mean anyway?

I decided I'd have scans this first time round, although it's probably

not something I'd bother with next time. At the 12 week scan I realised there wasn't a lot of point in having them, as I couldn't have cared less about the nuchal fold test or whatever it is, and I knew without the intervention of technology that my baby was growing happily in there. But as I watched that monitor and saw the outline of my baby's little face for the first time, this overwhelming feeling of recognition came over me. It was me. I got the distinct impression that I was looking at a version of myself, growing inside me, a mini-me. And so I finally got an inkling of what we might expect: it was a girl. I was pretty sure, although I found myself rubbing my belly and saying, 'what are you in there?' on a regular basis. I tried calling the baby by the girl's name we'd chosen, and sometimes it felt right, but sometimes it didn't.

My belly grew, and I gained a little weight, but really it wasn't much overall, although I put this down to the fact that I was already overweight when I fell pregnant. People began to speculate on the sex, as they do, and the consensus was a fifty-fifty split between girl and boy.

My husband is an impatient type and really wanted to find out the sex at the 19 week scan. We talked at length and I was adamant I didn't want to know, as I felt it was a little unnatural to have this kind of information prior to the birth. I also liked that I was receiving very gender neutral gifts, rather than lots of pink or blue! Eventually a friend said that she'd had the ultrasound technician write down the sex on a piece of paper and put it in an envelope, and then she and her husband had decided later down the track to open it and find out, in their own time. We thought this sounded like a good compromise.

I lay down and the technician passed the scanner over my belly, a single movement, and said, 'okay so I know the sex, do you want to know?' We couldn't believe it, it was that obvious! It had to be a boy, surely, as a girl's genitalia wouldn't be so obviously visible. But we asked her to write it down for us to look at later, if we chose. I put that envelope in a folder which ended up under a stack of other folders and papers and other stuff relating to the pregnancy. Occasionally we'd talk about it, but we never bothered to dig it up. Eventually my husband became used to the idea of waiting for the birth to find out the sex and he said he was glad we didn't find out at the 19 week scan.

As I got bigger, I received more and more speculation from friends, family and the general public about the sex of my baby. I mused on how much of an obsession this seems to be for people, to know the sex, but I figured that it is one piece of information that tells us about a person, and with a new baby there's not much else in the way of clues to who this person might be.

More people began to say it was a boy: a random old woman in the supermarket said, yes, it's a boy. My landlord asked me to turn around and said, oh yes, it's a boy because you don't look pregnant from the back. Yes it's true, I hadn't put on a lot of weight (female hormones make you gain weight), but my skin hadn't been too bad (a sure sign of a boy, in my opinion, because the male hormones give you pimples). My mum always said you can see in a woman's face whether it's a boy or girl, as she looks more male or female. I

really want:

a story of pregnancy and gender.

couldn't tell. My dad said if my belly was pointy it was a boy, but if it was round it was a girl. No idea.

I was very surprised that neither of my parents had ideas about the sex, as usually both will be certain of one or the other, and usually both are correct. Too close to be objective I guess. My husband kept poking my tummy, lamenting and saying, 'you're a boy aren't you, I just know it'. We both really expected a girl, we wanted a girl, mainly to use this awesome name we had. My due date was 14th May, and we decided that the middle name would be Autumn if born before 1 June, and Winter if born after.

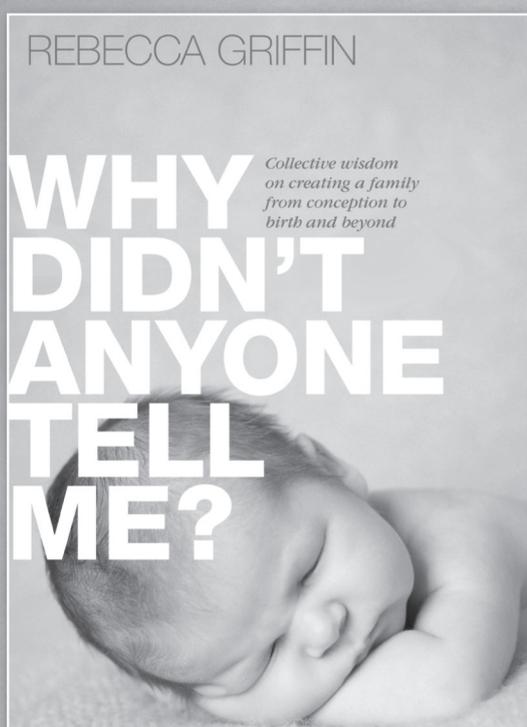
Labour was so long and the birth so intense that when I finally held our baby in my arms, I realised after a few minutes we didn't know what we had! I lifted the wet washcloth and there it was, a little boy. There was no room for any kind of disappointment, but I did get this strong sense that my baby was a stranger. He was totally foreign to me, I didn't know him, even though I'd given birth to him, and it was a surreal experience getting to know him as I learnt how to care for him. I hadn't expected to feel like this, no love at first sight, no recognition, no connection. It wasn't bad or negative or wrong, it just was what it was.

Later, when we finally decided to name him Isambard, after the great British Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, Andrew after his dad, and Winter because that seemed more like a boy's name even though he'd arrived in autumn, I felt more like I should have

known all along that he was a boy. My parents both told me they'd known. My mum said she saw it in my face and the shape of my belly about a month before he was born, but she knew I wanted a girl and couldn't convince herself it would be a boy. My dad said his grandmother had told him how to tell the sex from the belly shape and he'd known it was a boy all along but didn't have the heart to tell me as I was so adamant it was a girl.

My mum says, 'Oh it's great that you had a boy first, boys are simpler and less subtle, good to learn on'. She imagines the next one will be a girl. And so do we. I will probably look into charting my cycle and trying to make a girl, but if it's another boy, so be it. I think although sex and gender are part of a person's identity, they are only that, a part, not the whole, and trying to control it is probably futile. Who am I to determine the identity of a human being coming onto the earth? I am merely the parent, the temporary guardian of that soul, and my role is to help guide and protect as and when needed. Ultimately I think placing too much emphasis on avoiding gender stereotyping in babies and children can be just as detrimental as enforcing gender identity on a child. Identity is whatever a child realises it to be, and the individual will remain true to his or her inherent nature, whatever that may be, regardless of external influences.

KATHARINA LOGAN



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Gender.

To Know or not to Know?

AKAL KHALSA

I had never experienced, before or since, such exquisite joy as I did when I discovered my little baby was a girl. Even now, 31 years later, I get goose bumps when I think about the experience of discovering her gender. To put this into context, I had always thought it would be nice for our first-born to be a boy, not that we had tried to influence that outcome in any way. It also seemed to all the wise old women of Leichhardt, that the way I was carrying suggested to them that my baby was a boy. I was so cocky that when anyone asked me I would answer that I was probably having a boy, not that I thought that I had any preference or desire for one over the other. This caused some concern amongst my close friend, as they were worried that I would be disappointed if it were not a boy. How wrong they were. My delight could not be quantified and she has had me wrapped around her little finger ever since.

When it came to planning for our second baby, I did put more thought into it as we were only planning to have two children. Many, many years ago, sometime last century, when I did my midwifery, the women who were being treated for infertility and had successful pregnancies, more often than not, had baby girls. Back then the

fertility treatment was not as sophisticated as it is now and was based on the women taking their temperature first thing in the morning and when they ovulated they would either hauling their partner into bed for the day or present themselves for treatment, which consisted of having artificial insemination. I reversed this process and "did the deed" just prior to ovulation. It worked and so when my darling son popped out it was not such a surprise and I was very happy with my "pigeon pair".

I believe that couples miss a wonderful experience when they elect to find out the sex of their unborn infant. I fully accept that it is their right and a choice that they make because it is available to them. These days ultrasounds are more sophisticated than they used to be so there is less chance of error when determining the sex of the baby.

I also have an opinion about a baby that arrives already named but that is a story for another day.
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Four boys and a girl



AMY DAVIDSON

After having four boys we had given up on the idea of ever having a girl, and we were quite happy with our family of boys. When our youngest was about fourteen months old, we were very surprised to find out that we were expecting again. We weren't planning anymore children, but after getting over the shock we grew excited. We decided not to find out the sex of this baby as we had with all the boys. At this point we expected another boy and thought that would be very convenient. Of course it would be exciting to have a girl but we didn't hope for it. Throughout the pregnancy everyone would have comments about the sex of our baby, saying we hope you get a girl this time. It annoyed me a bit as we didn't mind either way and we really wanted our child to feel loved and accepted no matter what!

While I was birthing our baby I kept saying "Good boy, you can do it, that's it boy." I was convinced it was another boy. As my husband caught our beautiful baby I asked him what we had and he announced that we had a girl! We were so surprised and it took weeks of checking her nappy at every change to fully believe it. I would call her 'him' all the time in that first couple of weeks and everyone would correct me. The most common comment we got after Isabella was born was "Yay, you finally got it right", or "You finally got one!" Then people would go on to say you can stop now that you have your girl! I was really surprised that people are so opinionated on the sex of someone else's baby and family planning! I love having four boys and they are all thrilled with their little sister. Future boyfriends beware!



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.***

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SEPT 2011

Sydney, Melbourne

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for more information and registrations go to

WWW.SCHOOLOFSHAMANICMIDWIFERY.COM



Mothering as a

'Motherless Daughter'



KIM RYDER



I have to admit that the content of this article has been floating around my head for what feels like months now, considering how to capture the heartbreak that is 'mothering as a motherless daughter', and how on earth to catch and articulate the many feelings and emotions that reel around my head and heart as I ponder the thought. True to form, the Universe has provided the inspiration as I am driven to tears from tiredness and sheer frustration of mothering a baby who is clearly tired from having been up for hours during the night, but who will not sleep, and who seems hungry but will not eat. Quite frankly, I am having another "I just want my Mamma!" moment. How perfect!

My own beautiful Mamma took flight on 1st January 2008, after too short a battle with cancer that ravaged her 64 year old body. As it became clear it was a battle we weren't going to win, we underwent a reversal of roles, and I became her carer. You could say in some ways, she became the vulnerable, dependant, at times fearful child, and I the ever present, strong and seemingly fearless parent. Needless to say all of our hearts broke... and remain broken. I experienced varying degrees of post traumatic stress, being plagued by nightmares and requiring counselling years after the event.

I am pleased to say that my pregnancy bought about some healing. A new focus... a new distraction... a new life where another had ceased to be. The nightmares stopped, and my ever growing tummy and squirming bubba created smiles where there once were tears. Treya was due on the anniversary of my Mamma's farewell party, but I hoped she would arrive on the day Mamma had departed. That may sound strange... but it would have closed a circle... made it feel like my own Mamma's energy was reborn in Treya's somehow. But our babies have their own birth stories to fulfil, so it was not to be. I do not honestly know what my Mamma would have made of my choice to homebirth, or whether her fear would have caused me to exclude her from the birth itself, but as Naomi Lowinsky is quoted as saying in Hope Edelman's book *Motherless Daughters*, "...Even women who have terribly difficult relationships with their mothers and have mixed feelings about their mothers being present still want them

around when the baby is born. You are so opened up by pregnancy and birth. It's a transformative experience, and it leaves you in pieces. A woman really needs to have a sense of mother at that time".

I don't know about you, but at 37, there are still occasions when "I just want my Mamma!", such as when I am sick and need caring for myself... when I have a success I'd like to share with her... when I have an idea I'd like to run by her... when I just want to have a whinge about everything and nothing... and when I need someone to see me at my worst and know that that version of me is not my essence. The longing for her presence has never been more intense however, than since the arrival of my own beautiful baby girl. I so want to share with her my daughters' achievements, like giggling for the first time, rolling over, and cutting teeth, and to simply see my Little Star look deep into her Nanny Carole's eyes and smile the smile of love.

Truth be told, I also mother without the presence of my own father, grandparents, aunts and uncles, with the last remaining chance to capture the verbal legacy that passes from mother to daughter and grandmother to granddaughter, dissolving with the passing of my own Grandma back in May 2009. So perhaps not surprisingly, I find myself longing for the presence of our family's matriarchs, wishing they were here to satisfy my need to hear my own history... tales of my own birth and childhood. How did my Mamma feel about having a caesar? How did she adapt to motherhood? Were any of my own struggles similar to hers? If so, how did she deal with them? Does Treya remind her of me as a bay? Did her own mother help her in the early days? What was I like as a baby? Did I sleep? The list goes on...

With the passing of my Mamma I have, among many things, missed the opportunity to say "Ah, I get it now". I get now why she could so easily say "I'd give my life for you" and I can now truly imagine the heartbreak she used to feel every time she farewelled me at the airport, as I departed for my life back in London. Through the birth of my own baby, I understand the overwhelming love that a mother has for her own child, and I am now better able to comprehend so many of the things my own Mamma used to say in relation to her love for us kids... only I don't get the opportunity to tell her so.

With just seven short months of motherhood up my sleeve, I have also gained a snippet of understanding of just what my beautiful mamma was losing as she journeyed towards her own departure. Just contemplating my own death and one day having to say goodbye to Treya brings me to tears, literally. How my brave Mamma didn't die of a broken heart at the prospect of leaving me and my sister is beyond me. I wish I could hold her just one more time, not as her daughter, but as a fellow mamma. That hug would say so much within it's tender silence: I love you...I forgive you...I thank you....

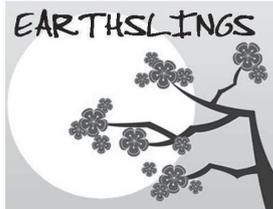
Having said all that, I cannot help but laugh to myself through the tears, because I know that if she were here now, her outdated approaches to motherhood would probably upset me at times! I can here her now: "Just let her cry it out!". So complex is the

mother-daughter relationship, I do not pretend to truly understand it's intricacies. What I do know, however, is that mothering my own gorgeous daughter without the presence of my own beautiful Mamma is so heartbreaking on so many levels.

I am blessed in that I am surrounded by my partner's family who are just amazing but, without wanting to sound ungrateful or 'poor me', it's not the same as having my own Mamma here. My Mum could tell when I was lying about how I was feeling, and she could just tell by a look, the sound of my voice, or even the energy about me. She'd administer a hug... and hold me tight just that little bit longer than non-Mums do... and my protective walls would come crumbling down as we often really need them to. Motherhood challenges me, and I miss the soft place my own Mamma would have provided, where I would not be judged or loved any less for being the tired, grumpy and often frustrated version of myself that I often am since becoming a Mamma.

It's true, we can create our own 'family' with friends and borrowed in-laws, and we do build 'family' as we bring our own children into the world, but there's just something special and unique about your own beloved and beautiful Mamma's presence in your world. Me and Treya's Nanny Glenda joke and say that Treya's mumbling to the seemingly invisible being floating somewhere above her is really her chatting with my Mamma... her Nanna Carole. Oh how I wish it were that simple!

So to all you 'motherless daughters' and soon-to-be 'motherless mothers', from my still broken heart I send you love, strength and healing. Should you wish to join me and start up a support group online, please email me at p4pandora@gmail.com



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Pink Stinks!

(...and blue's a bit smelly too)



"Gender" – urgh! What a minefield. There's only two of the suckers but somehow I want to ignore both of them!

My baby's now been with me for twenty four weeks. Beautiful. Precious. Planned. Healthy. The twenty week ultrasound showed everything pumping hard, flowing lovely and nicely sized – exactly how it should be. Husband and I were very clear that we didn't want to be zapping our child for any longer than necessary, so if gender was visible, great, if not, no drama – it didn't make any difference to us anyway.

Huh! It does make a difference. It makes a huge difference. To me. Husband was on the phone within minutes to his side of the fam (all overseas). Me, I've been hiding it from anyone with even the remotest chance of buying our newborn a gift. When the sonographer first settled the wand, our babe was spread-eagled right on top of it. I couldn't tell what it was – to me that hazy grey image could easily have been labia or penis, depending on my bias. The expert and husband though, were extremely certain of our babe's path in life.

I'm so scared of 'treating' our child like a 'girl' – will she then have to work her way through all the potholes of a society which believes it's male-dominated, like I did? Or will she have to do that anyway? And why does someone like me, (may I say, educated, conscious), have double-standards when it comes to gender? I've no problems with girls in blue shorts but a boy in a pink dress? Now that would make me uncomfortable!

I am bothered by all the injustices in the world, where women are treated second-rate, but somehow I feel quite relaxed by it all too. Those (generalised) traits of power and control mean 'men' (generally) would never accept a world equally shared with women (who generally, would take the opportunity to understand his perspective and work together for him to overcome his fears – ha!). Yes, I admit it. I believe females (generally) are far more advanced emotionally, physically, spiritually. To me that's just the reason why we (generally) don't feel like we need to rule the world – we understand that it really just doesn't matter!

But what then, if it's a 'boy'? How do I raise him to ensure he has the confidence, true confidence, and calmness of self, to know his place

in the world? How do we ensure his awe and wonder at the amazing creature beside him – woman? How does he take this deep feeling and be empowered by it – and empower others?

But, oh no. Here come in all my lifetime of experience – all those times my dad wouldn't let me wash the car (I would scratch the car with the hose nozzle – brother better do it); all those times I used my charm and long legs to get, well, anything really: free ice creams, better service, a voice... I'm doomed to teach my child through my hazy rose-coloured glasses. *Sigh*

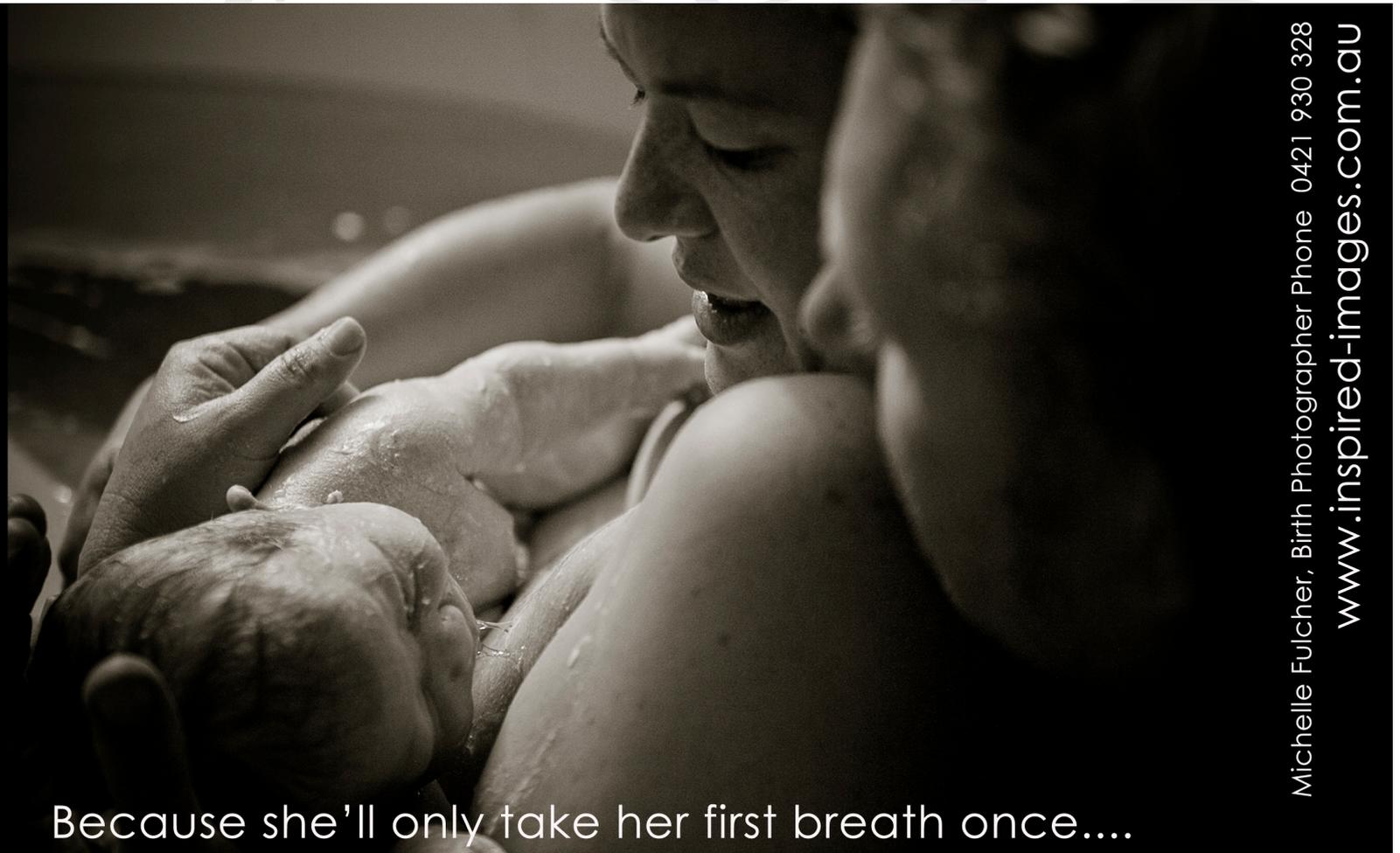
For the moment I'm still keeping our child's gender to myself. But why? What's the point? Aren't I just denying it? Isn't it just delaying the inevitable? Isn't it making it harder for me to identify with the soul inside while I'm forced to say 'it' in conversation?

But what if I can make a difference? What if, just slightly, my parents were able to be stretched, even just a little, to be more open to 'who' this child is? My mother shot straight down the mainstream line when I told her we were keeping the gender quiet. "Arwww. I wanted to know what we should buy." Well, mum, (and everyone else), what happens to a child who wears a white t-shirt? What happens to us?

It's driving me mental trying to sort out why I'm doing this – is it for my benefit or 'it's'? Will my efforts be in vain as my subtle cues tell this child just how to act anyway? Is my paranoia feeding the same stereotypes which I would love to see this child avoid? Will I be confident enough to take this child's cues – no matter which way they lead? I don't know. I really don't know.

I wish our child health, happiness, peace. That really is it. Gender-less, bound-less, health, happiness and peace. You don't need to be a girl to get those things. And you don't need to be a boy either. For now, I'm using my husband's brilliant response when people ask me the gender: "Don't buy pink".

TANYA KARLIYCHUK



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Natural Gender

Experimenting With

Ever since I was a child, I imagined that I would one day have a boy and a girl – I didn't know in which order and didn't really care. The most important thing to me though, was that I didn't have all girls. I am the youngest of three girls in my family, with my sisters being four and six years older than me. As kids, my sisters never really got along with each other, and me being the youngest by a few years (and a rebellious, attention seeking kind of kid), I was always considered the bratty little sister, and did not have a close relationship with them until more recent years. As the sibling relationships in my family were not exactly positive, I really didn't want to repeat my past family dynamics with my own family. This is why, if I had to have the same gender children, I would've preferred to have two boys – maybe because I was a big tomboy too. (It is funny that when discussing this with my middle sister, who I am closest to now, she also said the same thing for the same reasons. She did have two boys, while my oldest sister had four girls, which suited her as she actually didn't really want any boys!). So when my first bubba turned out to be a boy, I was kind of quietly relieved. But that did not stop me wanting to have the alternative experience of having a girl, and having the mother-daughter relationship that I craved but never got with my own mother.

I am a firm believer of the saying "God helps those who help themselves" (especially when it comes to making a healthy baby by undertaking a natural fertility management program, which had been so successful in preventing birth defects in my genes being passed onto my son). So when planning this pregnancy, I thought I would see if we could influence our next child towards not only being

healthy, but also being a girl. Somewhere along the line, I discovered the 'Shettles Method' of natural gender selection, so I decided to borrow the book: 'Choosing the sex of your baby' from the library and read up on it more closely.

The author is Dr Landrum B Shettles who was a pioneer in infertility treatment, and was one of the first people to experiment with out of body conception. Dr Shettles founded the method of IVF known as 'GIFT' (gamete intrafallopian transfer), which is a very similar process to IVF, but rather than an embryo being placed into the mothers uterus, the sperm and egg are placed directly into the fallopian tubes. Hopefully then fertilization will occur naturally. In his earlier days, he had many people ask if there was any way to influence their chances of getting a boy or a girl (the majority of whom, like me, wanted a balanced family of each gender). The doctor could not provide a solution so he decided to look for one. Eventually he noticed that sperm under the microscope had different characteristics between the X-chromosome carrying sperm (which creates female babies) and the Y-chromosome carrying sperm (which creates male babies).

The Y sperm are smaller and faster but die quicker than the X sperm. The X sperm are slower and better able to withstand the acidic cervical environment before the fertile cervical fluid is produced around the time of ovulation. Based on these observations, Dr Shettles' theory is that you can time intercourse and choose a sexual position that favours conception of your preferred sex. If you believe Dr Shettles' data and you follow the method correctly, there is an 85% chance of conceiving a boy and an 80% chance of conceiving a girl – better than 50/50!

To conceive a boy:

- Time intercourse as close to ovulation as possible: The idea is that since the Y/boy sperm are faster than the X/girl sperm, they will reach the waiting egg first, making it more likely that it will fertilize the egg.

- Abstain from intercourse for four to five days prior to ovulation (to build up the sperm count which favours more boy sperm). Have intercourse only just before and/or at the time of ovulation, so that the faster 'boy sperm' will get to the egg first.
- Have intercourse that allows for deep penetration. Shettles recommends 'doggy-style'. The idea is that the 'boy sperm' will be deposited closer to the cervix with less distance to travel to the egg, and where the alkaline cervical fluid is easier to swim through and most conducive to its survival.

- Men avoid tight clothes: heat kills off both types of sperm, but will kill off the less protected, smaller Y-chromosome sperm faster.

- Women have an orgasm: Female orgasm increases the alkaline secretions in the vagina that are favourable to the Y sperm. It also causes muscular contractions which propel the sperm upwards faster. Shettles recommends having an orgasm before or at the same time as the male partner.

We did not consciously do this method when trying to conceive my son Jetsun, as we basically just followed the advice of my naturopath in just trying to get pregnant successfully. But looking back, the conditions were absolutely perfect for conceiving a boy. We only had sex mid cycle when my cervical mucous was nice and fertile (and right after I felt like I ovulated from a slight pain in my left ovary!). We had deep penetration and I orgasmed (though we didn't actually need much convincing to make us follow that advice!) – all

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conditions which not only favour a successful pregnancy, (due to higher sperm count, less distance to travel to the egg and extra propulsion from muscular contractions), but also (I know now), favour boy babies. I will have to ask my naturopath if more of her clientele have boys from following her instructions!

To conceive a girl:

- Have numerous intercourse no closer than two to three days before ovulation – having more sex lowers the sperm count which also favours conceiving a girl; and avoid intercourse until at least two days after ovulation so you don't accidentally conceive a boy: The idea is that when you have sex a few days before ovulation, the Y 'boy sperm' will have already died, leaving only the X 'girl sperm' in the fallopian tube, waiting to fertilize the egg when it is released.

- Have intercourse with shallow penetration: Shettles recommends 'missionary position' or any position that will deposit the sperm slightly away from the cervix, giving advantage to the longer living, but slower X sperm which can better withstand the acidic environment of the vagina which it must swim through.

- Women avoid orgasm: Shettles suggests women avoid orgasm because orgasm makes the vaginal environment more alkaline and less acidic. Keeping the vagina more acidic will make the environment more hostile to the 'boy sperm' and more advantageous to the hardier 'girl sperm'.

So this is the method we consciously tried to balance the genders in our family when we conceived with my current pregnancy. We had sex multiple times leading up to but stopping (what I thought at the time was) three days before I ovulated. But I am pretty sure I actually ovulated a day later than I was expecting, as all my fertility signs (ie fertile 'stretchy' cervical mucous) continued until the following day – which usually dries up within hours of releasing an egg. This means we would have had sex four days before ovulation, which is more likely that (according to the theory) the Y-carrying sperm would have died out by then. I was actually surprised that I got pregnant at all but obviously there were some strong (hopefully girl!) swimmers still alive in my tubes! We also made sure that we had extra shallow penetration at the time of my partner's ejaculation and I did not orgasm. Needless to say, this was definitely not as enjoyable as conceiving Jetsun, and more of a procreation mission than your average hot passionate love making session (but there is plenty of time for that at other times!). It is important to note, that for couples who have trouble getting pregnant at all, this is not the easiest way to conceive, as the odds are more stacked against you.

Some may have ethical disagreements with consciously 'trying' for



VIRGINIA
MADDOCK

either sex, and it does bring up the question of 'what happens if it doesn't work and I am left with a feeling of disappointment of getting another boy'? I have mused over this, and (apart from the health impacts to the baby), it is one of the reasons that prevents me from getting an ultrasound to find out, as I do not want that feeling of potential disappointment to go through to my baby while it is inside me and intricately connected to me - especially as I do believe in the theories of prenatal psychology (where the mother's psychological environment and emotional influence on the baby in the womb can have an impact on their future psychological development). I figure that in finding out that I have had a boy in the first moments after birth, there will be so many euphoric endorphins running around in my body that I will just fall in love with him instantly to overcome that. After talking to people and reading some of the other stories in this issue of others who have had all of the one gender, once you get to know your child, you wouldn't want them to be anything other than who they are!

So here I am in my last trimester with less than two months left until we meet this new little person. I wish I could give you a definitive answer on whether this method worked for us or not, but as I do not even know that myself, that will remain a mystery until the day I give birth. I do feel like I am carrying a girl and sometimes slip up by referring to it as 'she' (and after all the above research and methodology, I wonder how it is possible that I couldn't be!), but I am also very conscious that this could just be wishful thinking, so I try not to entertain the thought too much in case I am wrong (which after all is anything from a 20 – 50% chance that I am wrong). So you will just have to wait until the next issue to find out the results!

**To read the stories of my journey through natural fertility and the birth of my son Jetsun, please see Birthings Issue #101: 'Sex'*

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For Ethan

YVETTE BARTON

I have always wanted to be a mother. As a child I played with the role, through my adolescence I dreamed of it, and as an adult I held it as my greatest goal. I had always known, or at least believed, that I would have a son. Fortune tellers in their droves had confirmed it, and neither my realisation that I was lesbian, nor a specialist telling me I was infertile, could shake my resolve. I would have a son and I would name him Ethan.

As the years went by and turned into a decade, the little baby boy I had envisioned never arrived. There were babies, many babies, but none stayed very long. I know the gender of only one, a little girl who left at 13 weeks gestation. I named her Annabelle. Regardless of uncertainty, I named my “ungendered” babies with sweet, feminine names. Amy, Temperance, Charlotte... names to be treasured. More out of self preservation than true faith, I came to regard these babies as messengers. They were my angels. They reminded me to keep trying. They reminded me that my son was still out there somewhere, waiting for the moment that his life could be realised. They were the little girls I was not destined to birth, sisters of the son that I would.

When a baby finally did arrive it was by unconventional means. After so many attempts to have a child, I was desperate. I had been

diagnosed with a clotting disorder that can cause miscarriages. The treatment was dangerous and controversial. I felt if I lost another child I would lose myself. With embryos in storage from my last round of IVF, my specialist suggested what was then considered to be a radical alternative. I could transfer an embryo to my partner who could carry my biological child for us. I seized this chance with both hands, believing it was my only hope to achieve the dream.

The realisation I had made an error in judgement occurred the night before the transfer. Somehow I knew the pregnancy would take. When I was proven right, I decided that all hope of carrying and birthing my own baby was gone. My son would arrive, birthed by another woman and that would be that. Despite my desperation, I discovered that it was not enough to have a child. It was not even enough that the child was a product of my DNA. I wanted to carry and birth my baby myself. It was my feminine birthright.

The weeks went by and, while my baby grew healthy and well, my emotional conflict grew stronger and stronger. At a point I don't recall, I began to pray that this child was a girl. Somehow I believed that if my partner was carrying a girl, the chance for me and my son would still exist. At nineteen weeks my prayers were answered when the ultrasound technician announced that this baby seemed to be a girl. On 22nd October 2004 my daughter was born. It remains one of the most joyous moments of my life. My dream was renewed. My son was still out there waiting for me. This little girl had been sent to ease my suffering heart.

I named her Finlay Genevieve. Even now the name Finlay for a girl still receives raised eyebrows, incorrect notations as 'male' in computer systems, and bemused clarifications that she is in fact a girl. Many considered my name choice 'a gay thing' – an attempt to flout convention and assert my 'masculine side' by forcing my 'sweet, innocent, little girl' to bare a man's name. The truth is I chose a gender neutral name because, as a woman with a very feminine one, I am well sick of being pre-judged based on my gender. I have learnt from experience that in the world of business, discrimination against women is alive and well. With a gender neutral name, I thought, the 'on paper' impression will fall to Finlay's skills, experience and qualifications. My one reservation though was that when grown Finlay might curse me and my feminist ways, wishing she had a 'girl's name.' For this reason I decided to give her a very feminine middle name – an identity scapegoat.

As Finlay grew so did the hubbub around us. Family and friends scorned as I resisted their attempts to fill my daughter's wardrobe with pink and frills. It was wrong, they said, even cruel. I was forcing my opinions upon her, even trying to take away her natural femininity. I stood my ground and as the years went by my baby grew into a little girl who loved dolls and trucks, and liked to play house and climb trees. She could hold her own in an argument and seemed to be a born leader, but at the same time she developed a depth of understanding about human emotions that many adults don't possess. I began to see her as my opus – living proof that when gender stereotypes are resisted, and society's attempts to enforce them are pushed back, a child can grow into a truly well rounded individual. She was a child of the future, a future in which gender would be irrelevant. I was almost right. After five years of gender neutral parenting the true test arrived – school.

Are you interested in any of the following?



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By the time Finlay had finished term one of kindergarten, the cracks had begun to show. Unthinkable phrases were being uttered in my home. Phrases like 'I can't wear that, it's blue!' and 'That's a boy's toy!' But the worst was yet to come. It arrived in the form of a tearful Finlay coming home from school lamenting her unknown father – a sperm donor identifiable when Fin turns 18. It was not enough to have mothers, she said. All the other children had daddies (an exaggeration) and she wanted one too.

We talked for a long time that night about 'what daddies are' – what it was about a father that she felt was missing from her life. It wasn't, we established, having someone capable of using power tools, mowing a lawn or playing soccer. She had mothers that could do all that and more, and companies like 'Dial-a-Hubby' do not make their money only from women. Being born male does not ensure a person can build a cupboard any more than being born female ensures you can bake a cake. We talked about children who grow up adored by one parent alone, and those abused in straight, two parent households. We talked about cultures in which female children are raised by the women of the family, while male children are raised by the men, and those in which a community of people raise the children together. We talked about the concept of 'parents' rather than 'mothers' and 'fathers', and in the end I suggested to Finlay that perhaps her conflict had nothing to do with men or women, mothers or fathers. Perhaps it was not the absence of someone in particular in her life. Perhaps it was purely biology curiosity combined with peer pressure – a need to know where she came from, the other person from whose DNA she was created, combined with a need to fit in rather than stand out. In any case, she being the child of a donor, and I being a lesbian, meant that Finlay would not grow up with a daddy, and this was something she needed to accept.

Finlay's resolve came in the form of a prophecy for her own life. She would not be gay, she said. She would marry a man and have children, and together they would be a family. Ellen Degeneres once said that the idea that children of gay families will become gay themselves is ludicrous. After all, her parents were straight, and look how she turned out. I have lived up to her assertion. Here I am, a lesbian, and it seems I have ensured my daughter will be straight!

As Finlay struggled with her need for a father, I struggled with a need to realise the dream of a son. It is ironic that for all my lesbian leaning and feminist parenting, we two women were seeking men. Undaunted by the fact that almost two decades had past, I continued to try to bring a child into the world myself.

On ANZAC day 2010 I had an embryo transfer. I knew two things that day – that this baby would survive, and that this baby was a girl. This evoked in me a sense of utter terror and confusion. After all, I believed I could not carry girls. Over twenty years I had convinced myself that any girl I carried would die and only a baby boy could survive. I held my sister up as proof, a woman who had two still born girls before giving birth to two living boys. How could it be that after all this time my longed for pregnancy would bring me another daughter? Despite feeling her feminine self growing inside me, I worked hard to convince myself my baby was actually a boy. Looking back I think I needed to do this for my own sanity. After so many losses I needed to believe in myself and my child, and somehow the only way I could do that was to believe in the dream, son and all. At

the same time I began to look at Finlay and a new dream of hers – a dream to have a sister. It would be wonderful, I mused, for her to realise that dream. Perhaps too, having a girl would heal some of the long carried hurt I felt that Finlay had been borne by another woman.

At nineteen weeks my dream was both shattered and reborn. There before me on the screen was a healthy, gorgeous baby. A girl. My family were relieved. After all, how exactly could a single lesbian have raised a son? It would have been wrong, they said. Their God had saved me from myself and sent me a child of the gender I was better equipped to raise! I began to muse about the embryos left in storage. I no longer saw them as a chance at a son, but as my children. Tiny babies who, if given the chance, might also survive to bring untold joy to my life and this world. I decided that if a boy ever arrived, I would still call him Ethan, to remember the dream that kept my faith alive and brought me Finlay and this new little girl.

On 21st January 2011, five days after my fortieth birthday and twenty years after my quest had begun, I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. I named her Charlie Georgina.



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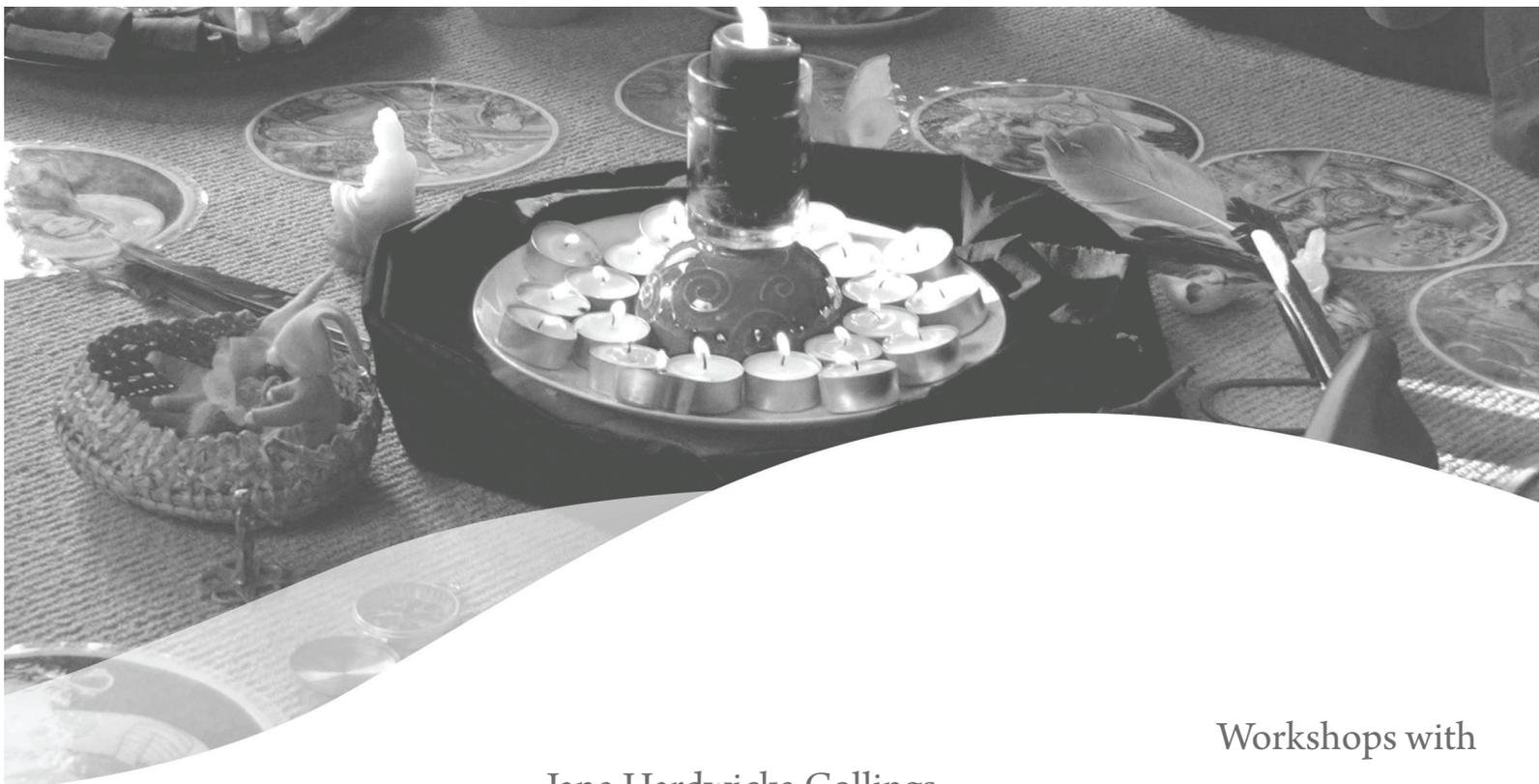
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Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

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Pregnancy - The Inner Journey Workshop

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Queensland TBA
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A Boy

After 3 Girls



When we began our fourth pregnancy we decided straight away that we would be keeping the gender of this baby a secret from others. Having three beautiful daughters already, we knew that whatever gender this fourth bubba was, it would be a blessing.

During the pregnancy with our youngest daughter Aurora (our third pregnancy) we had encountered lots of well, 'interesting' could be a word to use (but really I want to say rude) reactions when we found out we were having a third daughter, from other people. In fact people's reactions were part of what fuelled us to find out her gender and proclaim to people how absolutely THRILLED we were to be having a third daughter. Even so, once she was born, the comments began "Will you have any more in the hope you have a boy?", "You gonna try for a boy next?" "Oh how nice would it be for you to have a boy", "Don't you wish you could have a boy after all these girls!" I was shocked and saddened by the attitude that our family could not be complete without the 'magical' gender of a boy child.

As we knew we intended to have a few more children, we usually answered people's 'well meaning' comments with a "Oh we plan on having many more children and will be so happy regardless of their gender." We really wanted people to know that we would be having more children and that our growing family size was not due to us trying to have the elusive boy and keep going until we got the gender 'right'.

I should add here that of course we thought a little boy would be a lovely addition to our family and my husband especially had dreams of having someone else in the house who he could actually understand, BUT we felt so blessed with our girls and knew how wonderful they were and that each child is beautiful regardless of gender.

So, when we began our fourth pregnancy journey it was clear in our minds that we wanted to avoid 'well meaning' comments from others about our baby and their sex. This baby was very much wanted and would be loved and treasured, girl or boy.

We let everyone know that we would keep the gender a secret if we found out, and because God had given us the word JOY for this pregnancy, we referred to this baby simply as Bubba Joy.

For numerous reasons we had chosen to have the eighteen week ultrasound, and we had decided that if the baby wanted to show us, we would find out whether we had a little girl or a little boy being nurtured in my womb - although, my mother's intuition felt like this baby was another little girl and this actually thrilled me. Girls I know, girls I can understand, another little girl to play with and have fun with her sisters.

During the ultrasound the baby was not too concerned at showing themselves, but all of a sudden it turned and gave a very clear shot of it's 'third leg.' "What?" was the first thought in my head. A boy, hang on, my babies aren't boys! I was sure this baby was a girl. But it was clearly NOT a girl.

In all honesty a shot of disappointment went through me. I was so used to having girl babies that boy babies just seemed so foreign to me. Me - the mother of a little boy? We left the ultrasound a bit in shock, and had to digest the news that we were indeed now having the 'magical boy gender'.

We were even more glad of our decision to keep the gender a secret as we were already imagining people's responses - "Oh how great you are FINALLY going to have a boy!" Ah no! We are having a much wanted and loved child for our family, not a much loved and wanted child as long as it was a boy.

Throughout the pregnancy it drove people mad that we weren't telling the gender, but we were firm in our decision (except of course my beautiful best friend), and we enjoyed quietly picking up little blue suits and blankets. I had great fun tie dyeing my pink slings blue and looking for some boyish MCNs.

We had our name all picked out and a cute little first outfit to dress our baby boy in once we had had our beautiful homebirth.

I had to work through a lot of issues during the pregnancy in regards to mothering a little boy. This was completely uncharted territory for me and although it felt exciting, I wondered how it would be breastfeeding a little boy and changing a little boy's nappy.

When our son Zephaniah Simcha entered the world in a beautiful home water birth on the 17th July 2011, the minute he was in my arms all fears melted away. He was my child, I was his mama, and boy or girl, he was beautiful and loved and mine!!

We are still adjusting to having this new little life in our family and I must say I am loving all the sweet blue things! And looking forward to more years of cars, trucks, dirt and the differences a little boy will bring.

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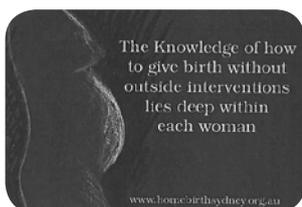
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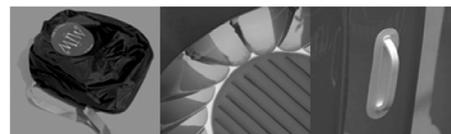
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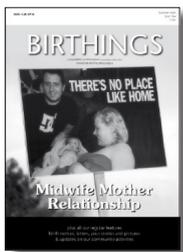


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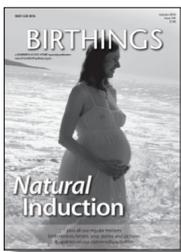
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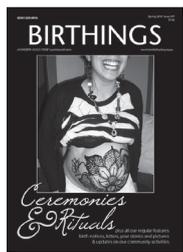
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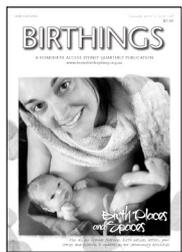
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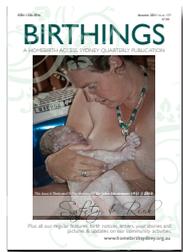
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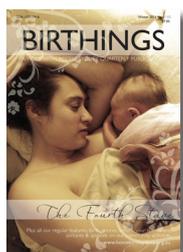
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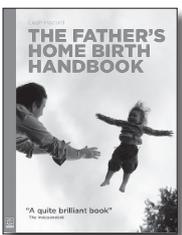


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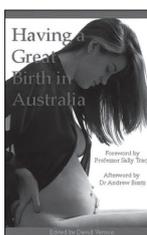
BOOKS AND DVDS



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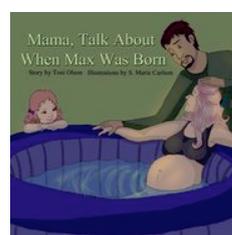
THE FATHER'S HOME BIRTH HANDBOOK
Leah Hazard
As hospital-based maternity services become increasingly medicalised, more and more parents are deciding that birth belongs in the home. For many women, this choice may be an easy one, but for their partners, home birth raises some serious questions. For the first time, The Father's Home Birth Handbook provides a resource aimed specifically at exploring men's hopes and fears around home birth. \$22.00



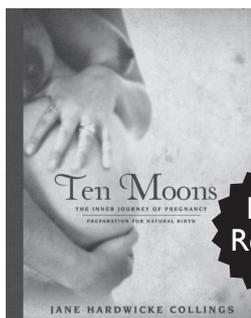
HAVING A GREAT BIRTH IN AUSTRALIA
David Vernon
This is a collection of candid stories from 20 Australian women who have recently given birth. These stories tell, with honesty and insight, about the challenges and joys of childbirth. Each of these women discovered the value of being able to make informed decisions about their maternity care and with the right care, had positive and empowering birth experiences.
Aust 2005
012BK \$24.95



WE'RE HAVING A HOME-BIRTH
Kelly Mochel
Children will love this colorful, contemporary book about their family's special upcoming homebirth event. A great tool for discussion about what to expect when the baby arrives, this affordable book covers important issues such as the role of a midwife, being good labour support, noises to expect mom to make, cord cutting, placenta delivery and breastfeeding. Combined with healthy conversation about pregnancy and homebirth, this book will help teach children that birth is a natural occurrence, not a medical emergency.
SKU: KMBK \$12.00



MAMA, TALK ABOUT WHEN MAX WAS BORN
Toni Olson
This tells the story of Max's birth, which takes place at home in water. Max's older sister likes to hear about when Mama first learned that she was pregnant; about seeing the midwives; about preparing for Max's arrival and finally his water birth in their living room.
\$25.00



New Reprint

TEN MOONS BOOK
Jane Hardwicke Collings
A unique guide to pregnancy and birth. This book offers practical tools and suggestions to help women reconnect with the spiritual side of birth. The spiritual journey of pregnancy and natural childbirth are acknowledged in relationship to the earth's natural rhythms. Subjects covered include, letting go of fear, connection with the baby inside you, yoga and meditation.
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MY BROTHER JIMI JAZZ
Chrissy Butler
A beautifully illustrated children's book, written from the perspective of a young girl about the homebirth of her brother Jimi Jazz. This book embraces natural active homebirth, breastfeeding, co-sleeping, cloth nappies and siblings at birth.
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013BK \$20.00

3 HOME BIRTH ICONS



3 HOME BIRTH ICONS DVD
Maggie Lecky Thompson
Honours the lives and work of Henny Ligermoet, Joan Donley and Jeannine Parvati Baker, who were passionate and fearless about maintaining a stand against ignorance and oppression regarding childbirth and early parenting.
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017DV \$20.00



THE WONDERFUL PLACE BOOK
Chrissy Butler
This unique picture book is printed onto 100% post consumer recycled paper which affirms the sustainability of breastfeeding. 'The Wonderful Place' is a delighted look at full term breastfeeding through joyful artwork and the whimsical musings of a breastfed toddler. \$20.00

Our Unplanned

Freebirth of Edan

Edan Bruce Caganoff, 3450 grams. Born 9.10pm on Valentine's Day, February 14th 2011. Four hours first stage. Fifteen minutes second stage.

BRONWYN KIRKPATRICK
AND GARY CAGANOFF



Mum

He and I made a beautiful duo as my body opened in my small, dark music room to birth him. I felt so calm and in control this time around ...

He slipped into his father's waiting arms ... "It's a boy!", while Granny and big sister Alina looked on.

Sonja arrived ten minutes later (we left the call a little late!) and helped me to birth the placenta.

I birthed him in my space on my terms and I felt fantastic, floating in a bubble of new motherhood for months after!

Dad

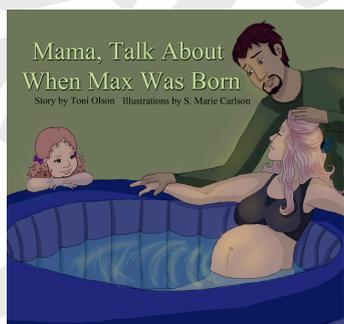
Bronwyn chose to birth Edan on all fours, in the dark, on the floor of her small music room, leaning over a large gym ball, rather than the birth pool like we did with Alina - now age four. With the aid of a torch I had a dingo's-eye view with Bronwyn's mum Janet and Alina standing at the door behind me. Alina was fine watching. It wasn't planned that she would. She was busy with Janet doing some colouring-in in the sunroom and could come and go as she pleased. Usually coming to check out

what all the load moaning was about. But near the end, when Bronwyn's waters broke, I called for Janet to bring in some more towels. Alina naturally followed and they both stayed.

After the waters broke we spoke to Sonja on the phone. She was twenty to twenty five minutes away in her car. As Bronwyn was progressing so quickly, it soon dawned on me that I was most likely going to have to deliver the baby. At first I felt a slight panic, but I also instantly felt the need to go and wash my hands which turned into an appropriate ritual, eradicating the panic somehow.

Another moment of panic arose when I excitedly told Bronwyn that I could see the head crowning and the umbilical cord across the head. Bronwyn says something like "What!!! That's not supposed to happen. It could get squashed with the pressure of the head squeezing out." Oh. Yes. Slight panic. I thought I'd better check my facts, so I took a closer look feeling the baby's head, finding that what I thought was the umbilical cord was in fact a long line of hair that had been moulded into shape by pressure and wetness. The thin edge of the wedge, so to speak. Phew! The panic left. Next push the head came out. I'll never forget the blue face, eyes closed, bubbles coming out of the nostrils. Next push the entire body slipped into my hands and at the same time I heard it breathe its first breath. Instantly it came to life. As I passed the baby under and up to Bronwyn I saw it had a penis and cried out "It's a boy!" I was in awe of the baby and my beloved, and I felt a huge wave of euphoria move up through me. Janet gave me a huge kiss on the cheek. Bronwyn was up the day after the birth and bouncing around, feeling pretty empowered. Because the labour was so quick, it took less out of her. By comparison Alina's birth was a marathon twenty two and a half hours. Edan's was a one hundred yard dash. We attribute the quickness, not just to it being Bronwyn's second birth, but also to the chiropractic support she received for many months before the birth. It works on opening the pelvis, readying it for birthing. Thank you Drs Brian and Ryan at Blue Mountains Health Resources in Leura. And THANK YOU SONJA for all your support and brilliance with both our homebirths!!!

Book Review: Virginia Maddock Mama, Talk About When Max Was Born by Toni Olson



"Mama, Talk About When Max Was Born" is a newly released children's book to prepare them for the homebirth of their younger sibling. In the story, the mother explains to the little girl all the steps leading up to the birth of her little brother Max, including finding out about the pregnancy, what happens during antenatal checks with

the midwives, meeting the doula, preparing for the birth, filling and getting into the pool when 'Mama' goes into labour, the birth and the first hours immediately after.

It is written in the USA so there are a few minor details which may be different from some people's experience in Australia, such as having two midwives and going to see them at a clinic instead of them coming to your home (and it says "Mommy" instead of Mummy). The little girl also goes with her Nana before the baby is born and comes back soon after, which may not be in everyone's plan, but this is just one person's personal story after all, and the mother fills her in on those details!

I love that the style of narrative is the true account by the mother to her child, just like you would be telling your own child. What makes this book more endearing is the great illustrations that are colourful and yet not too cartoon-like as to make it unrealistic.

The day that I received this book in the mail, I read it to my son Jetsun and was pleasantly surprised that he was interested enough to actually sit through me telling it from beginning to end, twice in a row - his attention span would usually prohibit me reading anything longer than a baby book before he would close the book and get something else!

HAS is now stocking "Mama, Talk About When Max Was Born" for \$25 which can be purchased by phone or online. See the merchandise on page 27.

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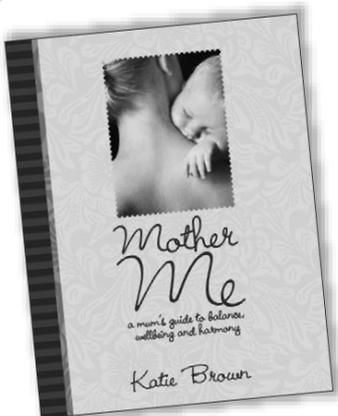
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BY KATIE BROWN

Mum-of-three, Katie Brown is one of Australia's most respected pre & post-natal yoga teachers. She is a certified infant massage instructor, baby yoga teacher, massage therapist, doula & author. She holds yoga classes and workshops in Sydney.



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Yiri's Birth Story



FLEUR
MAGICK



While I was pregnant, my children and I visited our bural [A Wiradjuri word meaning birthplace, placenta and place of placenta burial] for healing and learning time. Country spoke to us and sent us the totems of the new teachers that would come into our lives during this new chapter. Country also began to speak about the learning journey that mother and new child would commence together. Country showed us a waterfall and gave us ochre to dance. During my pregnancy, whilst at our bural, I was gifted a dance to honour water.

Almost a month prior to Yiri being born we travelled again out to our bural to wait for Yiri to come. The month was spent in different types of ceremony: making new friends and sharing in reconciliation ceremony; family healing time ceremony with my children and my mother; women's ceremony with other Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal friends and family; and personal ceremony time for me, alone, preparing for this birth and this new mutual learning journey.

All of it was wonderful. This month of experiences will always remain as one of the most rewarding months of my life. The birth preparation and the birth itself were everything that I needed to fulfill my dream of birthing on country, strong in my cultural beliefs. It was healing for my mind, body and spirit and restorative of my inspiration.

I would love to live permanently at or near our bural in this simple way forever with my family. When I do die I wish to go to our bural to die and have my ashes spread there in that place.

The healing of the connection to country that the birthing stories of my three sons have given our family is immense. It was when I was pregnant with James that Mum and a friend first took me to the site (our bural) for healing time as a Wiradjuri woman. My Wiradjuri ancestor Annie Magick was born near the area and I immediately felt a strong connection to country in this place.

My first born, James, was born at Orange Base Hospital because I couldn't find a midwife to support me for an out of hospital birth. I had a completely natural birth on the hospital floor. James had his welcoming and naming ceremony at our bural when he was five days old. Just over two years later, Preston was born there on country, at our bural by the open fire. He was born on the floor inside a one-room stone cottage because of the winter.

Yiri has now been born in summer time at our bural. Born to the sound of the music made by the water flowing over the rocks of the Goulburn River. Born on the riverbank sand, under the overhang made by a cave, surrounded by a circle of ceremonial fires and under the starlight. Born to the Wiradjuri song sung by his ngama [A Wiradjuri word for mother - there are also other words for mother]

With the growing connection to country that these birthing ceremonies have given to our family, I have much more deeply begun to understand the loss of what was. As a family we have a place in country to go to where our ancestors once lived. My children are connected strongly to mother earth there, as is our belief when the bural is planted with the great mother. We have been visiting this place for mutual healing and learning as a family for over seven years now.

Seven years isn't very long in the story of our Wiradjuri and Ngemba people who have been custodians of this country since time began, since our creator and ancestors walked this earth. Now, as I often do, I begin to reflect on the great loss of the many generations of our Wiradjuri and Ngemba people since the invasion and desecration of this country. We have begun to repair a tiny fraction of what was, and it is definitely making our family much stronger. But it is only a tiny fraction of what must be repaired. And we have had to work very hard for this small but powerful healing connection we have achieved as a family.

And yet the country there, this SACRED Wiradjuri birthing, healing and learning place, is under threat from mining at the Moolarban Coal Mine. I gave birth on a mine lease. The escarpments may collapse in the future if mining is not halted; the river may become too polluted for new born babies to touch in the future if our way of living in this country does not change drastically and with haste. Everywhere we walk is land holding the stories of the ancestors of this country. Now we have contemporary custodians. My children and I are custodians of this land, our mother. Our bural holds our stories now. We love the country and do not want our bural or any other places in country anywhere in 'Australia' to be destroyed. We want people to take care of mother earth, our land, our rivers and each other.

Country revealed to me Yiri's birth totem in the lead up to his birth. Yiri's totem has a very strong connection to water. Partly during my personal ceremonial time waiting for Yiri and partly after his birth, I was gifted a song in Wiradjuri language to honour water. It is the song to go with the dance I was given by country earlier during his pregnancy. I was singing Yiri the song to honour water during my contractions and immediately after he was born.

The next song and dance that I can feel readying within me is a song I'm being given about my mother and all mothers and mother earth. My amazing, strong and powerful mother is the reason our family has been given this healing gift of restoring our connection to country through these births. My mother has supported me in all my decisions to birth on country, has been present at every birth as our Elder and has given endless love (and much organisation) towards us achieving this as a family. I know my mum has seen the healing taking place within us and is feeling it herself. My mum has given me this gift. She was the one who first reconnected me with this special site and I haven't stopped going back and getting stronger since.

As I was giving birth to Yiri I was cradled in the arms of my mother as we were all cradled in the arms of our mother ancestors and our earth mother. To birth on country and for my children and I to have our bural connection has been immense healing. Not all Aboriginal women can make the decision to birth on country due to health or other reasons, however those that wish to do so need to be fully supported to birth in the way that is our religious and cultural right. However, all Aboriginal women and families, whether they birth in or out of hospital, definitely need the opportunity to have access to special country where they can plant their children's bural and where they can share in women's business and family cultural and spiritual learning and healing. I'm hoping to make this vision a reality that is available to any Aboriginal woman and her family. I would like your support.

Think of a large expanse of bush in Wiradjuri country with fresh water from a river or creek and springs. Imagine eco buildings built by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal hands together, buildings powered by solar power. One of the buildings is a birthing centre for Aboriginal women who wish to birth inside but not in hospital. Nearby is the river and a ceremonial birthing circle for those who wish to birth outdoors.

Some of the buildings are little cottages so the families can come and stay for up to six months prior to their due date. During this time the families are receiving support to heal through culture, to heal from trauma, to heal from substance abuse, to heal from violence, to heal together. At one end of the property is a men's space and building where the men are learning and healing and preparing to support their families.

Even if women can't birth out of hospital for health reasons, they can still come to this place for prenatal and postnatal healing and learning with their families and to have ceremony and plant their placenta if they wish, or we will support them to plan to do so in their own country.

We need midwives to attend the women at the healing property for prenatal and postnatal checkups and support and for the actual births. We need health professionals such as Indigenous counsellors and other health professionals and social workers to assist with healing and reintegration of families to broader society a few months after the births... but first we need the land to begin the process of building this vision. I'm asking you, all of you, if you can support this vision in some way, if you can please contact me via email: indyamarra@hotmail.com

I want to build a business selling products to raise money towards buying the land. Perhaps you can help with this business in some way, or perhaps you are in a position to donate finances or time to this vision so that we can get land. I really hope some of you can, as I know an opportunity such as this will drastically change the lives of many, as it has changed mine and my children's lives.

I would like to extend a special thank you to my midwife Hazel Keedle who I highly recommend. Hazel's website is at: <http://www.midwifehazel.com/>

Also a huge thank you to my Doula Danielle Martin who is awesome! Danielle's blog is at: <http://douladanielle.blogspot.com/> And a very special thank you to my mother and my dear friends and family who came out to the site to help with Yiri's birth.

To help with the campaign to stop mining at this bural site please visit: <http://www.savethedrip.com/>



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Odin's Birth



BRONWYN HALL

It was the Thursday before the Easter / ANZAC Day Long Weekend and I was 41+2. I was due to hit forty two weeks on the Tuesday public holiday. Hazel and I decided to go for an ultrasound to check cord flow and fluid levels. The results showed that I had dangerously low fluid levels. Hazel called an obstetrician based at a different hospital to see what he thought we should do next. He said we should come in for monitoring with the view for an induction as we were at risk of the placenta shutting down and oxygen levels to the baby dropping.

I want to say here that I was so upset at this point. It meant that I wasn't going to have the homebirth I wanted so much. We had everything all ready – the pool, sheets, towels, food, drinks, candles, music, oils to burn – everything! I hadn't planned to be labouring anywhere else but at home, so our transfer bag was very light. My head had trouble getting around what my body was doing and I felt deeply saddened by how things were turning out. We went to the hospital and the obstetrician said he would begin induction in the morning. We discussed my transfer plan. We were really, really lucky that the obstetrician was very supportive of homebirth and adopts a minimal to no intervention approach, and he agreed to most items on the transfer plan. I spent the night sobbing, feeling like a homebirth fraud and as though my body had failed me. I certainly didn't feel ready to birth this baby.

In the morning we started the induction. To respect my wishes for a natural birth, the obstetrician said he would administer half the normal dose of hormone gel for the induction and wait 6 hours, and if I hadn't progressed he would give me the second dose and wait another 6 hours. We went ahead with this – my first gel was at 11am, second at 5pm. I spent the day walking, rebozo-ing, trying to get things moving. I asked my baby to please think about starting to get moving, connecting with him/her, encouraging him/her to choose their own path earthside. I felt a little anxious as I knew the longer it took, the smaller our window of opportunity was for a natural birth. I also recognised that my anxiety wasn't going to assist our baby to come any sooner! So I tried to distract from this as well.

The hospital staff had a very minimal presence, doing only what they had to and leaving me and my birth team alone. I didn't start feeling anything until around 8pm. Very mild, irregular cramping crept in. I jumped in the bath for a bit, ate some dinner, chilled out. Cramps became a bit harsher but I could still lie through them. While I was waiting for the obstetrician to come back to check me at the end of the twelve hour time frame, my waters broke. I felt so relieved! We would reassess in the morning. Again, I asked my baby to keep things moving and that I really wanted to meet him/her. My partner called Hazel to let her know my waters had broken (she said she anticipated a call at 3am!) and then he tried to get some sleep.

At this point I was being monitored for contractions and the baby's heartbeat hourly. It sucked. I despised it. It kept me on the bed on my back or side unable to move. The rushes were getting more and more intense, but they were all over the place – sometimes three in a row then I'd get a 5 minute break. I couldn't anticipate them, felt I had no rhythm and had no idea how far along I was (which in hindsight was a really good thing!) When I wasn't hooked up to the monitor, I was moving around as best I could, using the birth ball, swaying, pacing. I constantly felt like I needed to go to the toilet, so I would sit down then struggle to get back up. I was using all the breathing techniques I'd learnt and practiced to get through the rushes as best I could.

At about 2am I had trouble moving. I yelled at my partner to wake up (we both had about 4 hours sleep in the 48 hours before our baby's arrival) and rub my back. I think he did it for 45 minutes without stopping! I couldn't move. The rushes were coming faster, frequent yet irregular. I felt like I was disconnected from my body – I wasn't sure what was happening. By about 3am I asked my partner to call Hazel.

From that point on things were intense. Hazel arrived at 4.10am. The hospital midwife was trying to hook me up to a wireless monitor so I could move around but it wasn't picking up my contractions so the only way to know how I was going to was to check with me, only



I couldn't articulate what was happening. As I had never been in labour before, I didn't know how close I was to the second stage or when my contractions began and ended. However I felt like I could let go now that Hazel had arrived. I felt like my body was waiting for her to be there so I could be with someone who I trusted and felt safe with.

Hazel moved me to the other side of the bed and I kneeled on pillows while she put pressure on my tailbone as I contracted. She told the hospital midwife that the monitor wasn't working and that I was very close to pushing. I wanted to stand and lean over the bed. I became VERY vocal. I couldn't control my voice, my body or my movements. I remember saying "Surely I must be fully dilated by now" (no one responded because no one had any idea of how far along I was - which was just perfect!) and "I feel like I am going to piss myself" (and eventually "I'm pissing myself! I'm pissing myself!" as my hind waters broke during a contraction) and "I feel like my body needs to push".

I was sipping on homemade labour-aide, my partner kept putting a flannel soaked in ice water on my face and neck (Bliss!) and spraying my face with a labour mist spray (essential oils - made by Hazel). I surrendered; my body was doing the pushing. I had no control over what was happening. I was growling and roaring (my partner said he wished he had recorded the sounds so I could hear them - totally primal, like no sound I have ever made before). I felt the baby moving down, I thought he/she was well on his/her way and was crowning but he/she hadn't even started down the birth canal yet (an example of how the mind doesn't help in these situations - I thought I was a lot closer to the end than I was!) After each rush I would plead with everyone that it hurt. I swore. A lot. Loudly. But I had no control. It was time. Transition was over.

With each rush, I felt everything move. I was separating in places I never knew I could. The noises coming from my mouth started deep in my body and rolled up and out of my throat. I buried my face in pillows and roared. My head told me it was coming again, it was going to hurt and to just get on with it. Let go. I kept telling myself, let go. I felt burning. I felt splitting. I started to work with my body - at the beginning of the rush I felt my uterus muscles contract and I focused on pushing down.

I could hear what was going on around me despite feeling disconnected from my body and completely in my body at the same time. Hazel was telling the hospital midwife that her monitor wasn't working. The hospital midwife was saying that the baby's heartbeat had dropped dramatically and he/she wasn't coping. Hazel told her that the baby was about to be born which is why the heartrate dropped (moving through the birth canal). The hospital midwife left to call the obstetrician. Hazel told my partner to take some pictures quickly if I want some of me in labour. Hazel told my partner to stop taking pictures and get her some gloves - the baby was coming. Hazel told my partner to get the midwife back - he hits to emergency button. I was both aware of and oblivious to this.

After the burning, I knew the head had been born. I paused with my body. In one more rush I contracted the body out. It's 5.01am - only 50 minutes since Hazel arrived. Hazel helps me hold the baby while I sit back on the birthing stool. I hold my baby - it's a boy! His name is Odin! In the birth plan, my partner was supposed to announce the sex, but in all the swift labouring he was a bit taken aback by it all. And I got in first! In the end, Odin was born with only my partner, Hazel and I in the room. Odin made a few noises, kind of like a lamb baa-ing, as though he was clearing his throat.

I planned to lotus birth, so the cord wasn't cut. I sat for a bit taking him in. He was so chilled! He looked back at me, blinking slowly, taking me in. There were photos. Kisses. Instant relief! The obstetrician came in, I said "I had a baby!" and he said "I see. I'll leave you to it" and left! I moved onto the bed and laid back for some lovely skin to skin time to give Odin a chance to breast crawl and latch on for a feed, which he didn't seem too interested in doing (but it was amazing to watch him try). After about half an hour I birthed the placenta. At this point we decided to cut the cord as opposed to have a complete lotus birth, so my partner cut it. As the obstetrician was stitching me I remember my body shaking uncontrollably as the hormones ran through my system. It was the best rush and high I have ever felt! We went home six hours after Odin was born. While we weren't able to have the homebirth we had planned, we were able to have the hospital birth we had hoped for before homebirth was the number one option for us. I couldn't imagine birthing in a hospital without having the trust, support and safety of an independent midwife. Developing that relationship with Hazel was paramount to the success of my labour in hospital.



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The Epic Journey of

Isambard Andrew



I knew this baby wanted to come to us fast, but I didn't expect to go into labour before forty weeks. I felt a trickle just as I was falling asleep about 1am on Saturday 7th May, exactly thirty nine weeks! After mopping the bathroom floor, my mind was racing and I found it really hard to get to sleep. Where are the contractions, if this is it? And what about being Group B Strep positive?

Waking up on Saturday morning, I expected to feel contractions, but no, nothing. We bought a thermometer as Robyn asked that I monitor my temperature, given the GBS. I wasn't concerned about it, knowing my body and how it works. I rang my mum and she said the same thing had happened to her – waters broke, nothing happened for ages. That was heartening.

After nearly twenty four hours without contractions, I didn't think I'd ever have one. I found myself wide awake about 6am, although this wasn't too unusual as I'd been waking up in the middle of the night for the past week. I finally began to feel contractions steadily six minutes apart. The contractions stayed steadily six minutes apart most of the day. We decided a walk might help get things going, and we went along the coastal clifftop walk to the Macquarie Lighthouse and back. I sat on a bench and looked out at the ocean, wondering if baby was ever going to come.

Contractions strengthened and got closer together at four minutes, and I became a little more serious, not wanting to talk through them but still being able to hold a conversation. My mum and friends arrived but nothing happened, we just chatted and the energy was a bit flat. The minute I laid down to sleep I had a massive contraction, followed by another, ongoing at four minutes apart. I spent the night in and out of the shower and eventually woke Andrew about 4:30am.

About 10am Andrew got the pool blown up and after a problem with the hose and running out of hot water, I got in. It was bliss and the contractions came and went in smooth waves rather than rough peaks. Skye and Jess arrived back, and Robyn arrived and immediately checked the baby's heart rate which was solid as usual. I wanted her to tell me, 'This is the way you should do it' or 'You're at this stage' or 'If you do this, the pain will go', but she was just there. This was the beginning of my fight against the contractions. I grabbed Andrew's arm during each pain, not in control in the slightest. He breathed and made noises with me, without coaching. I began to say, "No, no, no" as each one rose. Robyn was amazing, she'd say, "Yes, yes, yes" over the top of my 'no's. I was annoyed, thinking, "But why would I say yes to this pain?", but she was right. Eventually Robyn said that given the GBS risk we needed to think about transfer for antibiotics. She talked as though I could just cruise

over to the hospital, have an IV of antibiotics, and cruise back home to give birth. Even changing position seemed insane, let alone getting out, dressed, into a car... But none of that was a consideration; I wasn't having antibiotics. I'd read and prepared: antibiotics would give me and baby thrush; they wouldn't kill all the bacteria anyway; and I naturally have lots of bacteria in my vagina, and I don't want to muck about with it. I didn't want to inhibit the formation of healthy gut flora in the baby, and I didn't want my baby to have antibiotics, especially when the risk of toxæmia from GBS is 1 in 1000. So I said, "No way in hell!" Robyn was genuinely concerned, and I heard her ring another midwife, and then Randwick hospital. I also heard her ask Andrew, who stuck by what I wanted.

Again Robyn mentioned transfer and by then I was thinking transfer myself, but not for GBS. I was thinking about drugs. The pain was all-consuming, and I wasn't getting breaks in the three to four minutes between contractions any more. There was pain in the front of my pelvis. I asked Robyn if I needed to transfer because the baby wouldn't come out and I couldn't handle the pain, and she said so firmly "Oh of course you can birth this baby here, there's no doubt about that." I was a bit annoyed; I wanted someone to tell me my escape from the pain was justified.

All sorts of crazy thoughts began to cross my mind. I had to get a break from the pain. How would I get drugs? No, not hospital! There are pain killers in the kitchen cupboard... I could just take lots. I pictured it. I wondered how I'd ask, how I'd get it, because I knew people might not take me seriously. I didn't voice any of this. Andrew had gone for a short walk to take a breather. I was roaring through contractions and Robyn was reminding me to keep noises low and guttural. I'd done no prenatal classes of any sort, and I'd found a lot of the birth preparation things I'd read, especially 'Birthing From Within', frustrating and 'not me'.

There was complacency in the room, another day was ending. I sensed that everyone had retreated, given up on me, like I was never going to get there. I was despairing. But I never voiced this, although I felt this way for so long. People had left the room. Robyn miraculously appeared at key moments like a fairy, and regularly checked the heart rate which remained strong and steady. She'd check my temperature, which never really varied. I got the sense my moaning was getting repetitive, it was not only tiring me out but I felt like it was draining on everyone else too. Everyone needed a break.

My mum was somehow next to me. I don't remember her coming there, she just was there. At first it was annoying. She has a very

Winter Logan

KATHARINA LOGAN

light touch and it can be irritating. But then she did something I don't think she's ever done. She began to tell me I could do it, and with each contraction she told me it was 'a good one'. She repeated the same things over and over, and in my head it was a bit annoying but I began to believe it after a while. She made the noises with me, in a really steady way, and it was just the two of us, breathing and making noises. She was the only one still sticking by me, and she wasn't going to let me get out of this. She's never done this; she's always let me get off scot free, give up halfway through, take the easy way out.

Everyone began to migrate back into the room, hanging around the edges watching and noticing the atmosphere changing. I was only vaguely aware of this, but everyone commented on it later. Twice I vomited pretty violently. Most of it went on Andrew! He took it all in his stride, didn't even change his shirt, just stayed with me. Robyn was excited by this, recognising it as a sign of transition. I'm not sure that it was, but things did change when it happened. Robyn wanted me to get out of the pool. Things were happening, but not enough, even I knew this. I wasn't getting a break between contractions because of the pelvic pain. Robyn suggested this might be the last bit of cervical dilation happening while the baby's head pushed against it. I managed to sit on the toilet then lie on the couch, then stand up for a few contractions, but it felt awful, and I begged to be let back in the pool.

I think standing up must have helped somehow, but eventually I began to feel my body push. It was overwhelming, like something taking me over, and my whole body convulsed. Despite the intensity, I was glad. I expected to feel the baby moving down the birth canal, getting closer, but nothing, it just felt like my body was pushing against a rock. After pushing a while, Robyn offered to check my dilation. I was silent, thinking to myself, what good is it? Let it just happen.

It seemed like so long that my body had been pushing, and Robyn had even said that I should try pushing on top of the involuntary push. Finally the pain in my pelvis eased, but was quickly replaced by another debilitating pain, all around my waist. Robyn said this was the uterus fatiguing, which made sense given I'd been having contractions for over thirty six hours now. I changed position to my knees, leaning forward over the edge of the pool, and Andrew was there again. This gave me a bit of renewed energy, but I soon remembered I didn't want to birth on my hand and knees, so turned back round to semi-reclining.

Eventually Robyn said to try and feel for the head and it felt like a centimetre of silky smooth opening. I pushed so hard, it was very empowering! There was a moment of relief towards the end of each push. I remember Andrew saying to me I sounded like I was enjoying myself at one point (I wasn't, but I guess he was probably thinking of 'Orgasmic Birth!'). Robyn said I should feel for the head again and this time it felt a quarter to a third out. I thought about all those people who breathe their babies out and couldn't understand how that is possible. I felt the perineum stretch so easily, it didn't sting, just stretched like a piece of tight elastic. It did sting at the front, and I was convinced I was tearing around my clitoris and urethra but I didn't care, I was almost there!

At crowning, everyone was oohing and aahing, standing around the bottom of the pool. I think I waited for the next contraction before I pushed out the shoulders, and then the body slid out with a rush and everyone gasped and cheered and I heard Jess burst into tears. Someone said it was 7:57pm. It was an intensely emotional moment. Robyn lifted him from the water and began unravelling the cord which was twice around his neck and once around his body. I helped pull it away and held him as he cried almost straight away. His body was purplish, his head slightly paler because of the cord, but he cried robustly and loudly. I massaged his little hands as I remembered that might help stimulate him, not that he really needed it.

As I looked at him and said hi for the first time, I realised he was a complete stranger. I didn't know him, yet he had come from me. Andrew was overwhelmed, and we looked at him and he said how proud he was of me and all sorts of other things, it was amazing. We realised we didn't know the sex – yes, a little boy, not what we expected but perfectly fine.

We could see that the top of his head had the imprint of the cervix on it, and also some lines that Robyn said could be my ribs. She speculated he had been breech and turned during labour, which would explain why it took so long from when the contractions ramped up.

The placenta was huge! We all checked it out, and Andrew cut the cord. Isambard fed about an hour after birth. He was 4kg exactly and measured 50cm long with big hands and feet. I had no tears, not even a graze, which was amazing because I'd felt such stinging at the front. Everyone eventually headed off and I was finally tucked up in bed with my little boy and my amazing husband.

I don't remember much about that first night, I don't know if we slept, having little sleep over the previous thirty six hours or more. I still can't believe I did it, I actually had my baby at home with no intervention, I stood my ground, I knew what was right, and I made it, perfectly.



Lephania's Birth



At the beginning of this pregnancy, God gave us the word Joy for this bubba and so we affectionately called him Bubba Joy. We found out the gender of our bubba but kept it a secret from everyone else. He was a little boy, which after three precious girls, was a nice surprise.

I focused on my health and was hoping to avoid a labour as long as my previous two out of three had been (twenty nine and a half hours and fifty hours). I ate well, took supplements and herbs, and saw a chiropractor, in the hope to avoid a posterior bubba like my last two had been. At my first chiro appointment I discovered my pelvis was out of alignment which is why my back had been hurting so badly, and it would have contributed to my long labours. After this I was optimistic that this birth would be shorter than previous ones. It also helped that Bubba Joy was in an anterior position.

At the end of pregnancy we had some extra stresses thrown on us that made the last weeks very emotional ones. So when forty weeks rolled around I was truly over it, however I was wanting to let Bubba come in his own time.

I began losing bits of mucus plug at thirty eight weeks, and had been having regular contractions since thirty six weeks, which worried me about knowing when I would be in proper labour.

On Saturday night, the last night before I began the dreaded forty first week of my pregnancy, I told my husband to put on an action movie, trying to avoid going to bed another night still pregnant. That morning I'd lost a bit of mucus plug with a bit of blood in it that had had me hopeful all day. And yet nothing else had happened, so once again I felt frustrated. I had a bath with clary sage oil, talking to this bubba telling him how eager we were to meet him and how much we loved him.

Through the movie I was having mild contractions at three minutes apart which were normal for night time, so I didn't get excited. I had a quick shower which dulled them down a lot. I was finding the movie a bit disturbing and since it was almost midnight, was thinking of bed, when I felt a weird pop, which I knew wasn't my waters. Went to the bathroom and was excited to discover a lot of mucus and blood - a bloody show. I tried to calm myself and remember that labour could still be days away, but while I was still on the toilet a contraction came, and oh boy this was the real thing.

I began walking around the house, weaving a trail through our rooms, seeing if contractions were forming a pattern. With each contraction I found I had to finish my circuit to lean over the cot and sway my hips til it was over. I did this for an hour and then looked to see that they were a minute apart and lasting a minute each. The movie finished and hubby became aware that I was acting differently. I told him that things might be on and we should start setting up. I honestly was expecting the contractions to fizzle out like normal.

We started setting up and each contraction I had to walk back to the kitchen, lean on the bench and sway through it. Because they were still coming a minute apart and lasting a minute, this meant I was not getting a lot done. I tried explaining to Kieran what to do but I was already finding I couldn't articulate my thoughts. I started to think that maybe we were going to have this baby a lot sooner than we thought and we should ring everyone. After two more contractions, I rang my best friend Kathy to tell her to come up. I then rang my midwife Hazel and she was on her way.



By now I really was finding it hard to talk and so I asked Kieran to ring our other support person Christine who would be helping our 3 girls during the labour. We couldn't get a hold of Christine, her phones were turned off, and so we left a message for her. I was stressed we couldn't get in touch.

I had some rescue remedy as I felt I needed to calm down and went to have a shower as the contractions were full on. Kieran began to fill up the birth pool. The shower was wonderful for the pain in my back and lower belly. I had contraction after contraction, they seemed to be coming with very little break in between and I began to need to vocalize through them. Then, oh no! - Our hot water ran out twenty minutes into the shower.

I hopped out and immediately the intensity of the contractions became overpowering, and without the hot water I felt unable to cope with them. At this point our ten year old Lily woke up and was very excited I was in labour. I became worried I was going to have Bubba Joy right there in the hallway and was beginning to shake from the contractions, so I sat down on a chair and talked to my body, asking it to slow down a bit.

Our one year old Aurora woke up and Lily took care of her, which was great. I had prepared a kids' box with snacks, videos, colouring in books and extra dummies. Mirabelle, our three year old, soon also woke up and joined in the wait excitedly.

I sat in the lounge room now, the contractions just as intense but slightly more spaced and vocalized, and I breathed through them, as without my hot water I was at a bit of a loss. I needed to squeeze Kieran's hand through the contractions which was making it difficult for him to fill the pool.

My lovely midwife Hazel arrived at this time at 2.15am, of which I was grateful. We chatted about what I had been experiencing and I continued to labour, needing to squeeze either Kieran's or Hazel's hand through the contractions for the next hour. She checked Bubba's heart rate - all good. I began to vomit through the contractions. Kathy arrived at 3am, and I felt myself fully relax as everyone was here.

From then it was all on. I began to block out everyone and focus on the intensity of labour telling my cervix with each contraction to open and relax. Kathy ran around at thirty two weeks pregnant taking pictures and helping with the kids. Hazel stayed there with me as I laboured and Kieran kept trying to get the pool filled for me. I began looking at the clock, worried about being in this pain for hours and looking longingly at the pool knowing I needed to get in as soon as possible. I kept asking if I could get in and was just waiting

for the water to get high enough for me. I knew nothing else would happen until I got into that water. When it was finally high enough at 5am I eagerly got in.

I had some full on, take your breath away contractions that brought an agonizing pain to my back. I felt completely overwhelmed by the thought of more hours of this intense pain and decided I just couldn't do this anymore. (Aha! Unbeknownst to me it was transition!)

I asked Hazel for an internal at this point because I really thought I was only around six centimetres and if that was the case I just didn't want to do this at all anymore. When she said I was nine centimetres I was so excited. This labour was actually progressing! I was not going to labour for fifty hours. I could be holding my baby soon!! The next contractions began to have that pushy grunt to them. After a few pushes I had a bit of a cry because I could feel how his head was still high in me - each push was hard work. After a fifteen minute second stage with my last birth, I fully expected and hoped this one would be similar. I flipped over onto my knees, leaning over the side of the pool. The only way I could get through the contractions now was to hold onto Kieran's hands and squeeze them tightly, loudly vocalizing; and for Hazel to press down hard on my lower back with a hot cloth nappy square on my back. At one stage I flipped back to sitting and had a few spaced out restful contractions but I found the pain in my back was too intense and my pushing didn't seem as effective. On my knees leaning on the edge, this is what felt best.

Finally I could feel the bulge of his head in my vagina and I could feel his head begin to stretch his way out. I tried to breathe through the stinging and was inwardly excited that it was almost over, my baby was nearly here. Once his head was out (revealing he was in fact in a posterior position, even though he had been in anterior position in early labour), I waited for the next contraction and out he came. Hazel pushed him up and through my legs and I scooped him out of the water and into my arms. I had such relief that two hours of pushing were over, and the excitement and joy to finally meet my baby.

Kieran jumped in to sit behind me so I could sit down and he couldn't stop crying and kissing me. Zephaniah made a little cry and then just stared at us with these beautiful big eyes - so alert and calm. I had another contraction and the placenta came almost all out. We all just gazed at this gorgeous new bubba, all so excited and thrilled. We checked to see he was indeed a Zephaniah and sat in the water, and Zeph began to smack his lips and root around. He had his first breastfeed and after 40 minutes we hopped out - the minute I stood up the placenta plopped fully out. We sat on the couch feeding some more with me on a complete birth high - so excited to have this delicious baby, full of intense love for another precious little one, so very glad labour was over!!

I showered, had a yummy cup of herbal tea, munched on croissants and couldn't stop beaming and marvelling at the joy that after a seven hour and forty minute labour, our gorgeous Zephaniah Simcha Edwards was born. Here we were in a new fresh day with a new fresh baby, adding beauty and joy to our home and family.

DONNA EDWARDS



Rowan's Birth



The birth of my first child Lewis was a transformational experience for me. He was born in the birth center at Sydney's Royal Hospital for Women and I was cared for beautifully throughout my pregnancy and birth by a fantastic midwife called Tess.

When I became pregnant for the second time I was pretty sure that I wanted a homebirth. I had begun to see birth as an integral part of family life and I saw our home as the foundation for that. I also knew that if at all possible I wanted Tess to be involved. She was practically my first phone call upon seeing the positive pregnancy test. Tess outlined my options for me: birth centre, a hospital / homebirth programme or a homebirth with her and another midwife she works with called Sheryl Sidery.

I seriously considered returning to the birth centre. I had had such a great experience there, why change? But my husband, Richard, and I went to meet Sheryl and I came away from our long meeting feeling positive that homebirth was the way to go. I had a lot of problems breastfeeding Lewis and he took a long time to regain his birth weight. This experience had left me feeling anxious and shaken about my ability to breastfeed a second time. After discussing this with Sheryl I began to understand that by signing up for a homebirth, I was signing up with two women who were going to be with me and support me every step of the way - through pregnancy, birth and the first precious weeks with my new baby. I was sold!

My pregnancy breezed by and Richard, Lewis and I looked forward to our antenatal checks with Tess or Sheryl. I loved watching Lewis get to know these women and 'help' them listen to the baby's heartbeat. I also loved our long chats during these check ups that ranged far and wide from babies and birth to TV shows and personal anecdotes. I was really excited about the birth and so were a lot of people around me. Friends from my mums' group were all interested in my homebirth and I fielded a lot of questions about the logistics of the whole thing. People always seem overly interested in what happens to the placenta! I immersed myself in reading about birth - at one point there were three books by Ina May Gaskin on my bedside table.

My due date came and went. My mother had arrived and was playing the waiting game with me, and as forty one weeks approached I could see my supported 'babymoon' post birth getting shorter and shorter. I decided to try a sweep but still nothing. As

forty two weeks loomed I began to see it as a deadline of some sort and I rapidly became more and more anxious and emotional. My husband comforted me each morning as I woke teary and frustrated. He spoke to me a lot about trust and letting nature guide us. Sheryl called me and reassured me that I was not yet overdue but we also began to speak about options if I went much beyond forty two weeks. At 41 + 6 my friend Sarah drove me to the coast. I had booked a scan for the next day to check the fluid levels. Sarah and I walked on the cliffs and I admitted that I felt I was losing trust in my body. I felt under scrutiny and I was irrationally afraid that I was not making the right decisions. I just didn't know anyone who had gone past forty two weeks! Sarah told me that she saw me inside a beautiful cocoon created by Richard, Tess and Sheryl, and that I was very supported and not having to make decisions alone. This resonated with me and looking out over the cliffs that afternoon I felt calmer. I began to visualise the birth if it couldn't happen at home. I knew that I would be disappointed if it came to that but I also knew that I would be surrounded by Richard, Tess and Sheryl who would try their utmost to make the experience wonderful. I think this visualisation was a very important part in my letting go of the anxieties plaguing me.

I hadn't been sleeping well for the past few weeks so when I woke in the early hours of the next morning I began to listen to music and read the news on my iphone as I usually did. Just as I was avidly following the breaking story of the News International scandal I started to feel gentle contractions. I could hardly believe what I was feeling and I lay quietly expecting them to disappear any second. At 4am Richard woke and asked if I was ok. I excitedly told him I thought things were happening and we lay and chatted for a while. We went downstairs, set up our birth space, organised for my Mum to take Lewis out for the day and I called Tess. She was just as excited as I was to hear that I was finally in labour and laughingly called me an eleventh hour minx. At 9am Tess came over to see how things were going. By this time my contractions seemed to be fading a bit. I confessed to Tess that I was worried it was all going to stop. Again I was losing faith in my body. Richard asked if we should still go for the scan that we had booked. Tess looked between us in wonder and laughing said 'No! You are in labour, you are not going for that scan, you are going to have a baby today!' I felt a rush of relief, hearing her reassurance.



NAOMI HOMEL

Around midday Tess did a check and we were both delighted to find that I was 6cm and fully effaced. Even though my contractions weren't very strong yet I properly relaxed and began to realise that I was going to meet my baby pretty soon. The next few hours were really enjoyable. Tess and Richard and I relaxed, chatted, read magazines, snacked and listened to music. I felt more like I was at a lovely indoor picnic rather than in labour! Sheryl arrived at 2pm and by this time I had to stop talking during contractions and occasionally walk through them, but in between I felt jovial and relaxed. By 3pm I was feeling nauseous and the contractions were requiring all my attention. I found relief by leaning on Richard with my arms around his neck. I threw up around this time and decided that I wanted to get in the pool. The pain so far had been pretty mild but now the feeling of pressure was intense. As the pool was being filled I stood by myself upstairs. I had a really intense contraction and as it peaked I flashed back to a conversation I had had with a friend who had recently birthed. She said that she had stared in the mirror and said to herself "You have done this before". As this particular contraction threatened to overwhelm me I chanted this to myself like a mantra: "You have done this before, you can do this".

Stepping into the warm water was like heaven... for a moment. I sucked a hydrolyte ice block and felt like I was relaxing in a pool on holidays until my contractions came on with renewed strength. I had an idealised plan in my head that I would be lovely and graceful during labour and breathe out my baby with minimum fuss. That plan went out the window as these new contractions rolled over me and entered labourland properly. The feeling of pressure increased with every contraction and I could hear myself shouting "No no no" throughout each one. I focused on Sheryl's face during the next contraction and thought "I need to be more positive". I started out shouting 'no no' and managed to get to 'ok ok' but try as I might I couldn't say 'yes'. The sensations seemed to overwhelm me in a way that they hadn't during my first birth. I think that birthing Lewis I had been in pain for longer and during this birth the pain was only really starting to kick in now so I was unprepared. I could feel massive amounts of pressure but I didn't really have a sensation that I needed to push. I had moved onto my knees in the pool and was resting my arms and face on the side. I was confused that I wasn't actively pushing, yet I could feel so much pressure. I became panicky and told Tess that I thought the baby was stuck. She reassured me

that it wasn't. I told her I couldn't do it anymore and she smiled at me and told me I couldn't go home! This referred to a joke she had made with me during my first labour where I had told her the same thing and she had said "What are you going to do? Go home?" Her humour relaxed me and while clutching Richard and Sheryl's hands I realised that during each contraction my body was pushing my baby down further and further. My body knew what it was doing. I just needed, once again, to turn my brain off and surrender. My waters broke at this point which also helped.

I could feel my baby's head just about to come out then as each contraction eased I would feel it slip back a bit. This frustrated me terribly but Sheryl calmed me by saying the baby was just stretching me. Finally, after two or three more pushes my little baby boy dove out into Tess's waiting hands. 4kg and 55cm long. All in all I had been in the pool for about 40 mins. Richard whispered to me that we had another little boy and I sagged on the soft edge of the pool. I summoned the strength to move onto my back and Sheryl held my baby out to me. I just stared and stared at him. I didn't want to take him from her yet, I needed my mind to catch up with my body. I looked at him in wonder and said "It's a baby". I'm sure everyone else in the room thought 'what else was it going to be?'

I love the moment of holding my babies for the first time. Sheryl helped me guide him to the breast and he latched on with gusto. The house felt warm and full of love as my midwives settled me into the nest that they had made for me on the couch. Lewis, my mum and Sarah all arrived soon after, Sarah began to make beautiful placenta prints for me and Lewis got to know his little brother.

I am so pleased I chose to homebirth. I felt so nurtured and supported by my midwives and I am blown away by the dedication that these women show to their profession and to women. So with a beautiful baby and a wonderful birth, I feel very very blessed.



Tor's Birth

ELIZABETH KENYON



My first two children, Rose and Leo, were both born more than a week after their due dates. So I was understandably expecting my third to hang around enjoying some extra womb time also. Since Rose and Leo both turned up on Thursdays, I had my sights set on the Thursday after my baby's Friday due date as the day he would probably make his entrance. In fact, he caught me by surprise when my waters broke at 1am the day before the due date. Yes, still a Thursday, but this little boy was much more punctual than his siblings!

My waters had broken before labour started with my first pregnancy too, so I wasn't panicked and knew I had a bit of time to prepare. However, my labours have always been fast, so when cramps started an hour later I called our midwife and suggested she headed over, as I was sure this baby would be here by dawn. She was happy to oblige, despite the fact I was only having mild contractions, as she had also attended Leo's birth, arriving just 20 minutes before he appeared - we had all been taken a bit by surprise at his speed.

My husband John and I were too excited to rest, so we both got up and readied the bed with plastic sheeting, made Rose's school lunch and started planning who to call to take the older children away. I would have been happy to have them witness the birth, but with no family in the country we had no-one I was comfortable with to child-mind while labour progressed. John felt they would be too much of a distraction and wanted to be free himself to give me all his attention, so we had a list prepared of friends to call on depending on the time and day it all kicked off. The first family on the list had gastro, the second were in Brisbane for a couple of days, but thankfully our third volunteer answered the phone when I rang at 6a.m. (between contractions that were getting stronger!). Our friend agreed to come over as soon as possible and take Rose to school and Leo to yet another friend's house for the day. Thank goodness for my wonderful mother's group network! With this organised, I felt able to let labour start properly, and while John woke the kids, fed and dressed them, our midwife kept me company in the bedroom as I managed the contractions. In exactly the same

spot on the bed as I had birthed Leo, I knelt and swayed my hips from side to side, holding onto the foot of the bed for support.

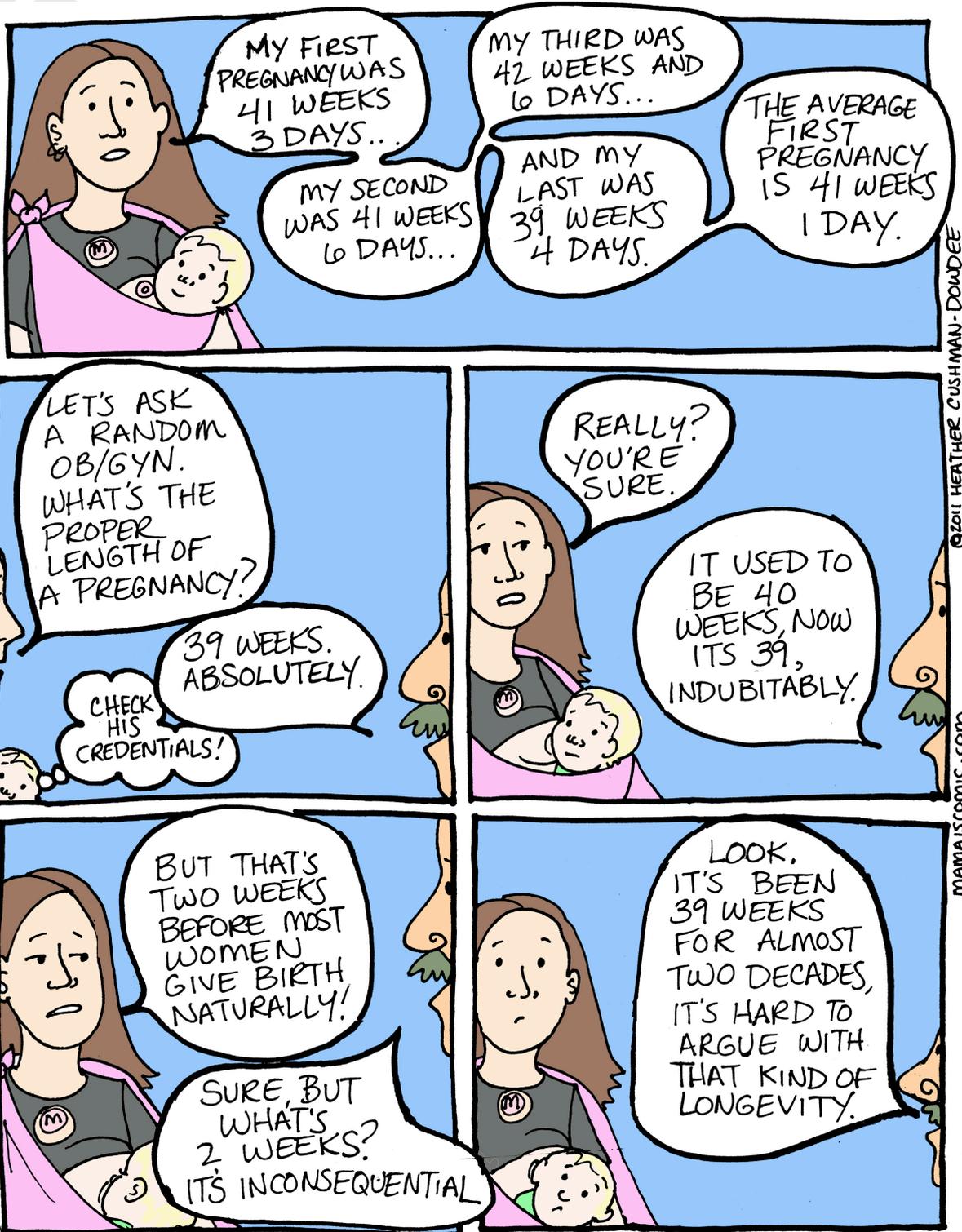
Very soon after the contractions took on their full strength I felt the urge to push. I was also making a lot more noise than I remembered from previous labours, but I felt that letting all the force and ferocity out through my mouth was allowing me to bear down more gently and with greater control at the other end! I was conscious that Rose and Leo were still at home and I was holding off on the last effort until they were finally whisked away at 7a.m. Once John was back in the bedroom and all distractions removed, I concentrated on the goal of seeing our new baby. With a big push, his head came out, but slipped back inside again. At this point I am proud to say I didn't swear, but did say (or possibly yodel), "It really hurts!" a couple of times. I also reminded myself that we had said we were stopping at three children and snap-shotting this moment in my memory would help me stick to that decision! After one more push our son's head was out and just a little more effort was required to get his body out. A gorgeous baby boy, welcomed to the world at 7:25am.

Our first son Leo, had been a whopper at 4.64kg and our midwife had advised me to follow a low GI diet and exercise well this time if I didn't want an even bigger baby! Luckily, my sweet tooth completely disappeared for the whole duration of the pregnancy and this baby boy was a manageable 3.7kg. I had no tearing of the perineum and the placenta came out easily after a brief rest. My worst injury was probably the hoarse throat from all the primal howling! After a quick shower and changing of the bedding, it was time for cuddles and a sleep.

We had found it hard choosing a name for our boy and had almost definitely settled on 'Adam' at 39 weeks pregnant. However, a last minute outsider had entered the name lists just days earlier and when we looked at our boy, all golden haired and born on 'Thor's Day', we knew we'd be calling him 'Tor'. We're thrilled to have you with us, beautiful boy!

Mama Is...

39 Weeks



Heather Cushman-Dowdee, long time creator of the comic "Hathor the Cowgoddess", is now creating all new comics over at www.mama-is.com. Heather is married to Kevin and is a homebirther, attachment parenter to 3 unschooled girls and a baby boy, and breastfeeding lactivist which inspires her cartoon creations.

HAS in the Community



27th Homebirth Australia Conference August 19-21 @ Newcastle Town Hall

Photos and Commentary by Virginia Maddock

HAS was delighted to participate at the Homebirth Australia Conference by exhibiting our stall and attending the talks. We sold about \$700 worth of stock including T-shirts, books and past issues of Birthings magazine. It was lovely to put faces to names of our members (and the odd midwife) who came up to introduce themselves, as well as meet some gorgeous home birthed babies - some of whom have had their birth announcements and stories featured in Birthings. Unfortunately I was unable to make the Friday workshops so I can only talk about the rest of the weekend.

Unfortunately Lisa Barrett who was scheduled to talk on 'Preterm birth at home', was unable to present due to being called back to Adelaide for a birth. I was really looking forward to hearing that one. Dr Sarah Buckley was next up with her talk 'Challenging the Boundaries of Birth Science'. If you have read her book 'Gentle Birth Gentle Mothering' you would have been familiar with her information on the birth hormones and how they work best during undisturbed birth. Following that was Liz Wilkes who presented an update on what is currently going on in the politics of homebirth in Australia.



Sarah McLean and Virginia Maddock at the HAS stall



Opening ceremony aboriginal dancers

Saturday started with the 'Welcome to Country and Opening Ceremony' featuring some aboriginal dancers. Then the first speaker was birth anthropologist Robbie Davis-Floyd whose talk entitled 'Mainstreaming Midwives' was all about the history of midwifery in America and their struggles to gain acceptance into the mainstream, as well as the conflicts between the different midwifery groups with their different titles and classifications.

After lunch was a tribute to "The Father of Homebirth" - the late Dr John Stevenson; then it was everyone's favourite midwife: Ina May Gaskin - author of 'Spiritual Midwifery', 'Ina May's Guide to Childbirth' and the newly published 'Birth Matters'. She spoke about maternal deaths in America which was just so sad hearing such tragic stories of preventable deaths due to negligent treatment in the hospital system. She highlighted the fact that Australia is following the US system, however the US is following Brazil which has a 90-95% caesarean section rate. Yes you read right - 90-95%! Therefore Australia is going to follow Brazil also if we don't fix our broken maternity system, with its increasing restrictions on homebirth and midwife led care!



Robbie Davis-Floyd lighting the conference candle with Sonja MacGregor



Dr Sarah Buckley



Ina May Gaskin (photo courtesy of HBA)



Midwives and students who participated in the passing of the knowledge ceremony

To be honest I was pretty depressed after this talk and starting to miss my little boy terribly, as it had been eight hours without him (which is the longest in 2 1/2 years I have ever been away from him), so I ended up leaving not long after she finished, so I could go and replenish my cup of mother love. Unfortunately I missed what I heard was the best part of the day with the VBAC hour, featuring HBAC mums Chloe Coulthard, Meg Fraser and Amber Janowicz tell their birth stories. From what I heard there was hardly a dry eye in the room! HAS member Karen Manning was also featured with the photo montage of her journey from caesarean with her first baby, to a fulfilling HBAC with her second. This I have seen before and it is very moving.

That night was a delicious dinner and entertaining show, starting with the passing on of knowledge beading ceremony. The first person was (recently retired) midwife Akal Khalsa who handed it on to two student midwives from each state and territory. When that was over I had the honour of presenting Akal with the HAS Honorary Lifetime Membership award (and a pink Cordyline plant) for her long service to HAS and homebirthing families since our humble beginnings pre 1979.

The entertainment was an 'interesting' play which featured vagina puppets. As I was sitting up the back and have the attention span of a fly at the moment, I missed the overall storyline and ended up leaving before it finished. There were plenty of laughs so it must have been pretty funny.



Virginia giving Akal Khalsa her Honorary Lifetime Membership

Full body and hand vagina puppets during the play

On Sunday Robbie Davis-Floyd started the day with a great talk on 'renegade midwives' who go outside the accepted guidelines of risk to fully support women who choose homebirth – I am sure that term will encompass many more midwives here if the proposed new midwife guidelines are accepted into midwifery practice!

Then Chrissy Grainger from Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support spoke of her journey as a homebirth advocate. Through a challenging presentation of technical difficulties, she told of her first birth in hospital where she challenged accepted protocol, and against the doctor's advice was the first woman in many years to have a natural physiological third stage (ie without syntocinon injection to hasten the birth of the placenta). With her second baby she desired a homebirth through her local hospital program but was told that she was too far outside the boundaries. But through her research with ambulance officers and pressuring the hospital, she gained acceptance into the program and went on to have a very quick homebirth, with sheer luck that the midwives were there early to attend her.

After morning tea, Sue Cookson who worked with Dr John Stevenson and has plenty of experience with multiple births, did an excellent talk on 'Twins – The Art of Birthing Two' which I enjoyed a lot. She outlined the safety and risks of different presentations, showed the average timings between births of the first and second twins, and showed a video interview and photo montage of two of her clients who birthed twins. She highlighted the important aspects such as appropriate diet to carry twins to full term (ie. 40 weeks) and rightfully disagreed with current obstetric beliefs that twins are full term at 36 – 38 weeks and need to be induced early.

Gary Caganoff was next and spoke of the home birth of his two babies. The first one involved dreams of turtles during the pregnancy indicating some deep symbolism, and the second one was born quickly into a bucket (which he bought with him to show us!) – Edan's birth story is in this issue. He was a great speaker who made the audience laugh.



Breech Panel



Ina May demonstrating rebozo technique on Renee Adair

Next up was a breech panel involving Dr Andrew Bisits (from Royal Hospital for Women), Dr Sarah Buckley, Sue Cookson and Ina May Gaskin. They each made a short presentation then it was open to the audience for questions. I asked for clarification on what "hands off the breech" meant (which is about not pulling the baby out!), as well as asking Dr Bisits if the upcoming publically funded homebirth program through RHW will ever allow breech presentations. Unfortunately my question was interrupted by another question to Ina May and I never got my answer (probably made the Dr breathe a sigh of relief, as I am pretty certain it would have been in the negative!).

There was another panel, this time on hospital homebirth from some midwives involved in the programs at St George and Wollongong– Christine Caitling-Paull, Jane McMurtie and Paula Richards; as well as Jane Palmer who runs a group midwifery practice and collaborates with an obstetrician.

Ina May Gaskin was next and spoke about her years as a midwife from the 70s to today, with slides and stories of her experiences. She did a great demonstration on Renee Adair of the rebozo technique for turning posterior babies.

Then it was the closing ceremony with Jane Hardwicke-Collings and her crew of shamanic midwives. Everyone in the room joined hands in a huge circle as the shamanic midwives played bongo drums and each person was given a candle that was lit from the conference candle, to take the essence of the light and positive energy gained over the weekend home with them, to be accessed again any time it is relit.

Next conference is in Tasmania and I cannot wait. Well done to HBA's organising committee for a fun, connecting and inspiring weekend!



Ina May and Robbie at the end of the conference



The closing ceremony

May 20, 2011 – ABC News (US) Childbirth at Home on the Rise, Says Report

<http://abcnews.go.com/Health/ReproductiveHealth/us-women-giving-birth-home-report/story?id=13640478>

New research suggests more women are opting to deliver at home in the US. Using birth certificate data, researchers from the National Center for Health Statistics report they saw a 20 percent rise in home births between 2004 and 2008.

Another factor contributing to the rise in home births could be the simultaneous rise in C-sections -- the focus of the 2008 documentary, "The Business of Being Born." The film, produced by actress and talk show host Ricky Lake, suggests childbirth was transformed into a highly medicalized procedure in the twentieth century, citing reports that 95 percent of U.S. births took place at home in 1900.

"I think in general, what's available to people in hospitals has become pretty far removed from a natural child birth," said Lorrie Kaplan, executive director of the American College of Nurse-Midwives.

June 24, 2011 – The Age Doctors failing to deliver on midwife Medicare rebate

<http://www.theage.com.au/national/doctors-failing-to-deliver-on-midwife-medicare-rebate-20110623-1ghgt.html>

A KEY plank of the federal government's maternity reform package appears to be failing, with just a tiny fraction of Australian midwives providing Medicare rebates to patients more than seven months after they were given access to the scheme.

Last November, Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon said midwives could start delivering taxpayer-funded maternity care in the community and inside hospitals if they struck collaborative agreements with doctors.

But seven months on, only 21 midwives of the 42,000 registered in Australia have signed up to access the Medicare benefits schedule and the pharmaceutical benefits scheme.

Liz Wilkes, president of Midwives Australia, a group representing private midwives, said the number fell dramatically short of the 700 midwives expected in the first year of the policy. She said many midwives had found it extremely difficult to find doctors willing to sign a collaborative agreement with them so they were eligible for patients to receive rebates.

July 11, 2011 – Los Angeles Times (US) At-home birth has pros and cons

<http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-home-births-20110711,0,3934461,full.story>

Though home births account for only about 1% of all births each year — 28,400 annually — they increased by 20% from 2004 to 2008 (the most recent available data), according to a May study in the journal *Birth: Issues in Perinatal Care*. The practice is most popular among well-educated mothers who favor natural childbirth without the drugs or surgeries a hospital might use.

The increase has reenergized the fierce debate over the safety of at-home delivery. The practice is officially frowned on by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which issued an opinion in January saying it discourages home births because the absence of emergency medical equipment and specialists accustomed to dealing with complications means that problems during labor could cost the baby's life.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists does acknowledge that home births are associated with fewer medical interventions than hospital births — a huge selling point for home-birth moms who want to experience a "natural" birth and avoid frequently administered drugs...

Women also turn to home birth in order to avoid caesarean sections, which have become more common as obstetricians became increasingly reluctant to take chances at the slightest sign of fetal distress. According to the CDC, caesareans now account for nearly one-third of hospital births in the United

States — a much higher rate than most doctors say is ideal.

What's more, many hospitals do not allow women who have previously had a caesarean to attempt a vaginal birth because of the risk of uterine rupture, even though a 2010 National Institutes of Health advisory panel concluded that the risk of uterine rupture during a vaginal birth after one caesarean was just 1% and that more women should be offered the choice. Women wishing to have a VBAC (vaginal birth after caesarean) may have no option but to do so on their own turf.

15 July 2011 – The Guardian (UK) We need a cultural shift on homebirth

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jul/15/homebirths-cultural-shift-report>

A discussion paper on the recent report out by the Royal College of Obstetrician and Gynaecologist which states that "too many babies are born in the traditional 'hospital' setting" and that "women deserve a medical service which focuses around their needs, is safe and effective ... and one in which the woman's informed choice is respected".

This doula states that if women are to opt for homebirth over hospital-based care, we must teach them about the benefits of choosing to stay at home.

28 July 2011 – The Atlantic (US) Giving Birth at Home: A Good Idea?

<http://www.theatlantic.com/life/archive/2011/07/giving-birth-at-home-a-good-idea/242691/#.TjHre8LGU8I.email>

An increasing number of women are foregoing hospital births and opting for a natural-feeling, non-medical process, reversing a century-old trend.

Since the turn of the last twentieth century, the trend has been toward hospital births, and now less than 1 percent of all births are at home. Still, that 20 percent increase reported by the Centers for Disease Control is stunning.

Expense may have something to do with the uptick. One woman quoted in the Associated Press article that ran in the *Express* said that her home birth cost \$3,300 as opposed to over \$10,000 in a hospital. But the trend toward home births is not just about cost. It's about the kind of experience one wants.

In 2005, the *British Medical Journal* published the results of a study based on nearly 5,500 home births involving certified professional midwives in the United States and Canada. Eighty-eight percent of the women had positive outcomes at home. Twelve percent of them were transferred to hospitals, 9 percent for preventive reasons and 3 percent for emergencies. The study showed an infant mortality rate of two out of every 1,000 births.

This is about the same rate as in hospitals at the time, according to Robbie Davis-Floyd, a medical anthropologist at the University of Texas at Austin and researcher on global trends in childbirth, obstetrics, and midwifery. The fact is that hospitals aren't failsafe either. Even medical professionals make mistakes, and there's always the risk of infection.

6 August 2011 – Newcastle Herald Roadside babies: Mums hit back at paramedics

<http://www.theherald.com.au/news/local/news/general/roadside-babies-mums-hit-back-at-paramedics/2249863.aspx>

The Ambulance Service of NSW warns of an increase in the incidence of ambulance officers delivering babies on the roadside or at home. Mothers say that they are going into hospital later due to being admonished by hospitals for going in too early.

Birthing advocates suggest more training in antenatal classes on unexpected deliveries and encouraging low-risk women to consider home births. Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support co-ordinator Chrissy Grainger said it was assumed first-time mums would have a long labour but it was not always the case. She elected to have a home birth for her second son because she almost got caught in the car on the way to hospital for her first when a train cut Scone in two.

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Wonderful, comprehensive courses focused on natural active birth including waterbirth, including practicalities of baby care. Participants 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, information www.julieclarke.com.au
Julie has a great sense of humour and a very gentle approach, she is supportive and flexible in her teaching approach. Good variety of courses to choose from: 6 wk course 1 night per week or 2 Saturdays condensed or 1 Sunday super condensed. Reasonably priced and discount available.
Julie Clarke / julie@julieclarke.com.au / 0401265530 9544 6441 / 9 Witherbrook Pl. Sylvania (20 mins south of airport).

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
48882002, 0408035808
janecollings@bigpond.com
www.moonsong.com.au
www.placentalremedy.com

HOMEBIRTH SUPPORT GROUPS

SYDNEY & SURROUNDS

Inner West Homebirth Support Group
Day: First Wednesday of Every Month
Time: from 10am
Contact: Magda 0410 139 907
magda.jansen@gmail.com

Sutherland Shire and St George Homebirth Group
10.30am weekly on Thursdays.
Contact Virginia 0415683074
or maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Illawarra Homebirth Support
Karen Sanders (02) 4225 3727

Mothers & Midwives of the South (Southern Highlands)
We meet every month in the Illawarra area. For more details contact Jane Collings on 4888 2002, 0408035808 or Jaia on 0431709978, jaia_shanti@yahoo.com.au
Everyone welcome!

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support
Gatherings fortnightly on a Thursday at 10am.
Alicia 47592336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com

Central Coast Homebirth Group
First Friday and third Saturday of each month.
Time: from 10.30 till noon.
Contact Kim 0406 502 715
p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com.
All welcome.

NEW SOUTH WALES

Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support (HHNBS)
2nd Wednesday of every month at 10am.
Carrington Community Centre: 1 Hargraves St Carrington
Contact Chrissy 0418 237 938 or email hhnbsgroup@gmail.com

Armidale and District Homebirth Support Network
Contact: Melodie
Mobile: 0402 910 211
Email: hbsarmidale@gmail.com

Mid North Coast Homebirth Support Resource & Referral
Berry Engel-Jones
(W) 6652 8111 (H) 6655 0707

INTERSTATE & NATIONAL

Homebirth Australia
Chris Wrightson
Ph: 0414 812 144
homebirthaustralia@gmail.com
http://www.homebirthaustralia.org

Queensland Home Midwifery Association
07) 3839 5883
info@homebirth.org.au
www.homebirth.org.au

Darwin Homebirth Group
Contact: Justine Wickham
Email: dhbginfo@gmail.com
Mob: 0438 888 755
www.darwinhomebirthgroup.org.au

Alice Springs Homebirth Group
Anna Yffer 0402 424 780
wildisha@gmail.com

BIRTH SUPPORT SERVICES: DOULAS

NORTHERN & NORTH-WESTERN SUBURBS

Jacqui James
I am passionate about supporting & encouraging families during pregnancy, labour, birth and in the early "daze". I work with both parents and assist in creating a nurturing environment for the baby to be born. The birth of a baby is a sacred experience and I feel honoured to be a part of it. I also facilitate mother/family blessing ceremonies.
I trained in 2003 at Birth Central, completing post natal doula in 2005. References available.
Mob: 0418 445 653
jacquij@people.net.au

Heather Crawford
Acupuncturist, Doula, calmbirth@
I practice from a lovely clinic overlooking Manly beach and provide acupuncture services for the whole family through pre-conception, pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period. I offer birth support and have been a doula for 4 years, I also hold calmbirth@ classes once a month in Frenchs Forest. I love tea and birthy chats or you can see my website for more info.
Phone: 9977 7888 or 0423 171 191
15 South Steyne, Manly
heather@heathercrawford.com.au
www.heathercrawford.com.au

EASTERN SUBURBS / CITY / INNER WEST

Australian Doula College & The Centre For Spiritual Birth & Development
The Australian Doula College is an integrated health care centre providing education, support and continuity of care for women during pregnancy childbirth and beyond. Through our network of qualified and experienced educators, doulas and practitioners, we offer a variety of services, treatments and support. As a training facility, we provide the support of a trainee doula for only \$165; qualified doulas range from \$600-\$1500. We look forward to being of service to you in this amazing time of your life. Please visit the website for our full range of services.
422 Marrickville Road
Marrickville, NSW 2049
1300 139 507
moreinfo@australiandoulacollege.com.au
www.australiandoulacollege.com.au

MotherBirth - ConsciousBirth
Erika Elliot - Birthing in Awareness
Please see my listing on the previous page under 'PreNatal Services' 0425 217 788
erikabirth@gmail.com

SOUTHERN SUBURBS

Natural Beginnings
Holsitic 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 2 prenatal visits, birth support incl. herbs/flower essences and reiki massage, follow up visit to debrief, and a beautifully presented photo book 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
9501 0863
5 Balfour Ave Caringbah 2229
www.naturalbeginnings.com.au

BLUE MOUNTAINS & WESTERN SUBURBS

Simply Birthing Doula Service
In my three years as a doula I have been witness to many natural births. I believe strongly in the women's ability to birth her own baby and in her own wisdom and instinct as a mother. I've also been teaching Prenatal Yoga for past 11 years and am a Childbirth and Early Parenting Educator. My focus as a doula is to ensure that you and your partner are feeling confident, reassured and informed in preparation for your birth. I am also available as a calm support to your family and other children.
Jenny Schellhorn: Doula, Childbirth & Early Parenting Educator. Pre Natal Yoga Teacher
9625 7317, 0403 957 879
jenny@simplybirthingdoulas.com.au
www.simplybirthingdoulas.com.au

Carol Flanagan

AUTHORISED CELEBRANT

0240 6112
0413 705 262
www.citycelebrant.com
carol@citycelebrant.com

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.

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 (Gymea) 9540 4992 bpvella@optushome.com.au

THE ELLA MAY CENTRE

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

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

I have attended homebirths as a midwife and have been a practising midwife for over 3 years. I have attended the homebirth midwives retreat in 2008 and also an active birth workshop. I have qualifications in massage, aromatherapy and infant massage. I have recently obtained Cert IV Breastfeeding Education (Counselling) with the Australian Breastfeeding Association and Childbirth Education training. I am passionate about keeping birth natural and providing continued care from pregnancy through to birth and during the newborn time. I have a keen interest in women achieving vaginal births after a caesarean (VBAC) in part due to my own personal experience of VBAC. I am a local mountains mum with a family including five children.

Hazel Keedle (Blue Mountains and surrounding areas)
4787 8430 0408 661 503 hazelkeedle@gmail.com

INDEPENDENT MIDWIFE: JACQUI WOOD

Pregnancy and birth is a normal, healthy life experience. As natural as it is to conceive your baby in a loving, safe and intimate environment, labouring and birthing at home, in your own relaxed setting, gives you the freedom to follow your body's instinctive knowledge of birthing naturally, without restrictions. As a Midwife, I have immense passion for my career and gain great professional and personal satisfaction from it. I offer a holistic approach to midwifery care, providing care throughout your pregnancy, labour and birth (a birthing pool is available for water birth) and postnatal care up to 4 weeks after the birth of your baby. All care is provided in your home.

Jacqui Wood (Blue Mountains, Western Sydney and South West suburbs)
0430 109 400
www.independentmidwife.com.au jacqui@independentmidwife.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.

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

LISA RICHARDS: BELLA BIRTHING

Holistic midwifery, working with women and their families for home birth on the Central Coast, Newcastle and the Hunter Valley.
Lisa Richards. Phone: 0404422617 Email: bellabirthing@live.com.au
www.bellabirthing.com.au

NEW BEGINNINGS MIDWIFERY PRACTICE

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

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

Sheryl has been in private practice for the past 23 years. Her core belief is that pregnancy and birth are not only about producing a healthy baby but is also a period of profound transformation for the parents. Sheryl lives on the northern beaches and takes only a small caseload of women. She has Medicare eligibility that provides a rebate for antenatal and postnatal care.
Sheryl Sidery: Northern beaches through to the Eastern suburbs.
0409760548 secretwomensbiz@bigpond.com

SONJA MACGREGOR

A holistic midwife who empowers and trusts a woman to birth her own baby in the comfort of her own home, surrounded by love. I provide a full antenatal, labour, birth and postnatal service in collaboration with the woman. Appointments are attended in the woman's home, with the inclusion of family and support people if the woman desires. I service Sydney, Blue Mountains, Southern Highlands, Illawarra, Central Coast & Newcastle.
Sonja MacGregor 0419 149 019
sonjamac@bigpond.com www.birthatome.com.au

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 91 13 3103.

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

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 42534256 and ask to book in with the Midwifery Group Practice (MGP). Your details will be taken down and MGP will return your call.

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 midwives are right for different women. Finding the right midwife for you is your responsibility. When selecting your midwife, we recommend you:

- Interview as many midwives as you can
- 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 homeopaths, 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

or 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 pregnancy? What do you 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 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

From 10.30am. Second Tuesday of every month

AUSTRALIAN DOULA COLLEGE

422 Marrickville Rd Marrickville

Bring a plate or something to nibble.

Children welcome.

Please call to confirm

Virginia Maddock 0415 683 074

NEXT MEETINGS:

13th September, 11th October, 8th November,

13th December

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		
Doula Listing	n/a	\$25
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 Karen
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.

Calendar

SEPTEMBER

Every Thursday

Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group

Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm

Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave

Caringbah (North)

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Whether 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.

Friday 2nd

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30am – noon

Location: alternating venues.

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

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

Sunday 4th

Armistide and District Homebirth Support Network

Location: Morning Tea @ Bec's house

Topic: Overcoming Fear

Contact: Please RSVP for further details by emailing Melodie at hbsarmistide@gmail.com

Wednesday 7th

Inner West Homebirth Support Group

Time: from 10am

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

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776

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

Wednesday 7th

Northern Beaches Homebirth Group

Time: 10ish am

Location: Dee Why, on the grassy area next to the playground on the southern end.

Contact: Patricia Twaalfhoven 0410 467 854 ptwaalfhoven@manidisroberts.com.au

Thursday 8th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

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

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Tuesday 13th

HAS Committee meeting

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Location: Australian Doula College, 422

Marrickville Road Marrickville

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirth-sydney.org.au

All welcome including kids.

Wednesday 14th

Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support

(HHNBS)

Time: 10am

Location: Carrington Community Centre (1 Hargraves St Carrington)

Contact: Chrissy 0418 237 938 or email

hhnbsgroup@gmail.com for more details.

Saturday 17th

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30am – noon

Location: alternating venues.

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

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

Monday 19th

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Topic: Natural birthing methods & natural pain relief options.

Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of

Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.

Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Thursday 22nd

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

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

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Thursday 22nd

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting

Theme: Vaccination

Time: 10am-12pm

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

Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au. Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

OCTOBER

Sunday 2nd

Armistide and District Homebirth Support Network

Location: Morning Tea @ Bec's house

Topic: The Fourth Stage- Newborns at home

Contact: Please RSVP for further details by emailing Melodie at hbsarmistide@gmail.com

Wednesday 5th

Inner West Homebirth Support Group

Time: from 10am

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

Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776

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

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Northern Beaches Homebirth Group

Time: 10ish am

Location: Dee Why, on the grassy area next to the playground on the southern end.

Contact: Patricia Twaalfhoven 0410 467 854 ptwaalfhoven@manidisroberts.com.au

Every Thursday

Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group

Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm

Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave

Caringbah (North)

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au

Whether 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.

Friday 7th

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30am – noon

Location: alternating venues.

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

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

Tuesday 11th

HAS Committee meeting

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Location: Australian Doula College, 422

Marrickville Road Marrickville

Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirth-sydney.org.au

All welcome including kids.

Wednesday 12th

Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support

(HHNBS)

Time: 10am

Location: Carrington Community Centre (1 Hargraves St Carrington)

Contact: Chrissy 0418 237 938 or email hhnbsgroup@gmail.com for more details.

Saturday 15th

Central Coast Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10.30am – noon

Location: alternating venues.

Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

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

Monday 19th

Illawarra Birth Choices Group

Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm

Topic: Natural therapies for pregnancy/baby

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

Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

Thursday 20th

Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group

Time: 10am-12pm.

Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.

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

Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.

Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Thursday 22nd

Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting

Theme: Unexpected outcomes including arming yourself with knowledge, how to be empowered if

a transfer is required and birth plans.
Time: 10am-12pm
Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.
Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au. Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 2nd
Inner West Homebirth Support Group
Time: from 10am
Location: changes every week so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.
Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776
Please feel welcome if you're pregnant, have children or are just curious about home birthing. Partners welcome too!

Wednesday 2nd
Northern Beaches Homebirth Group
Time: 10ish am
Location: Dee Why, on the grassy area next to the playground on the southern end.
Contact: Patricia Twaalfhoven 0410 467 854
ptwaalfhoven@manidisroberts.com.au

Every Thursday
Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group
Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm
Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah (North)
Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
Whether 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.

Thursday 3rd
Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10am-12pm.
Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.
Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.
Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.
Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Friday 4th
Central Coast Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10.30am - noon
Location: alternating venues.
Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com
Come along if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, mums, dads, kids, doulas, midwives, and anyone interested in homebirth (including homebirth > hospital transfers).

Sunday 6th
Armistale and District Homebirth Support Network
Location: Morning Tea @ Maddie's house Q & A session: Independent Midwives Pamela Bennett & Gail Baker 'The Midwife/Family Relationship'
Contact: Please RSVP for further details by emailing Melodie at hbsarmistale@gmail.com

Tuesday 8th
HAS Committee meeting
Time: 10.30am-12.30pm
Location: Australian Doula College, 422 Marrickville Road Marrickville
Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirth-sydney.org.au
All welcome including kids.

Wednesday 9th
Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support

(HHNBS)
Time: 10am
Location: Carrington Community Centre (1 Hargraves St Carrington)
Contact: Chrissy 0418 237 938 or email hhnbsgroup@gmail.com for more details.

Thursday 17th
Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10am-12pm.
Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.
Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.
Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.
Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Thursday 17th
Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting
Theme: Tips for siblings at birth, being an attached mother of 2 or more and tandem breastfeeding
Time: 10am-12pm
Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.
Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au. Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

Saturday 19th
Central Coast Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10.30am - noon
Location: alternating venues.
Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com
Come along if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, mums, dads, kids, doulas, midwives, and anyone interested in homebirth (including homebirth > hospital transfers).

Monday 21st
Illawarra Birth Choices Group
Time: 10.30am to 12.30pm
Topic: Homebirth
Location: Russell Vale Community Hall - corner of Keerong Ave and Channon Street Russell Vale.
Contact: Please call Sonia on 0424 051 246 or find out more at <http://www.illawarra.birthchoices.info/index.html>

DECEMBER

Every Thursday
Sutherland Shire / St George Homebirth Support Group
Time: From 10.30am - 12.30ish pm
Location: Virginia's house at 5 Balfour Ave Caringbah (North)
Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 maddvirg@yahoo.com.au
Our Christmas Party will be on 15th December. Dress festive, bring some yummy food to share, and a \$5 (non-plastic) Kris Kringle gift for the kids!

Thursday 1st
Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10am-12pm.
Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.
Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.
Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.
Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Friday 2nd
Central Coast Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10.30am - noon
Location: alternating venues.
Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com

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

Sunday 4th
Armistale and District Homebirth Support Network
Time: 10am
End-of-year Picnic
Location: Curtis Park
Contact: Please RSVP for further details by emailing Melodie at hbsarmistale@gmail.com
Please bring some 'family friendly' food to share. As it is Farmers Market Sunday there will be coffee and cake nearby.

Wednesday 7th
Inner West Homebirth Support Group
Time: from 10am
Location: changes every week so please email your details to Magda or call to find out where we are meeting.
Contact: magda.jansen@gmail.com 0403963776
Please feel welcome if you're pregnant, have children or are just curious about home birthing. Partners welcome too!

Wednesday 7th
Northern Beaches Homebirth Group
Time: 10ish am
Location: Dee Why, on the grassy area next to the playground on the southern end.
Contact: Patricia Twaalfhoven 0410 467 854
ptwaalfhoven@manidisroberts.com.au

Tuesday 13th
HAS Committee meeting
Time: 10.30am-12.30pm
Location: Australian Doula College, 422 Marrickville Road Marrickville
Contact: Virginia 0415 683 074 info@homebirth-sydney.org.au
All welcome including kids.

Wednesday 14th
Hunter Home and Natural Birth Support (HHNBS)
Time: 10am
Location: Carrington Community Centre (1 Hargraves St Carrington)
Contact: Chrissy 0418 237 938 or email hhnbsgroup@gmail.com for more details.

Thursday 15th
Blue Mountains Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10am-12pm.
Location: We are now meeting in alternating homes & local parks in the Blue Mountains.
Cost: A donation of \$2-5 is appreciated to help with group running costs.
Contacts: Alicia 4759 2336 or Sara dave-sara@bigpond.com To join our mailing list of upcoming meetings/topics please e-mail Sara.
Bring a healthy snack to share if you get a chance, if not come anyway. No meetings in school holidays.

Thursday 15th
Pregnancy & Parenting Network meeting
Theme: Christmas gathering - Celebrating Christmas as a family
Time: 10am-12pm
Location: Jane Palmer's house, 27 Hart St, Dundas Valley.
Contact: Please let Jane know you're coming so she can let you know if she has to cancel to go to a birth: 9873 1750 or jane@pregnancy.com.au. Please bring a plate of food to share. All welcome.

Saturday 17th
Central Coast Homebirth Support Group
Time: 10.30am - noon
Location: alternating venues.
Contact: Kim 0406 502 715 p4pandora@gmail.com or Jena 0404 712 392 morrisjenar@gmail.com
Come along if you are pregnant, trying to conceive, mums, dads, kids, doulas, midwives, and anyone interested in homebirth (including homebirth > hospital transfers).

The topic for the next issue is:

'Siblings'



Birthings is your magazine. Please contribute!

Submissions are welcome on anything to do with the topic of Siblings. This could be about older siblings during your next pregnancy, siblings during birth, siblings adjusting to the new baby, tandem feeding etc. As always, we also welcome your birth announcements, birth stories, photos, letters, art and poetry.

Submissions are due by November 1st 2011.

Please check word count before sending and don't forget your bio for the contributor's page!

Email the editor at: editor@homebirthsydney.org.au

Reminder: Please ensure we have your current email address so you can receive your membership expiry reminder, as well as all the important homebirth updates in our e-newsletter. And if you've recently moved, send us your new address so you don't miss out on the next issue of Birthings!

Email: member@homebirthsydney.org.au