AIMS For a better birth...

# Letters

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## Obstetric Failure

Over the years in the AIMS Journal I have read many appalling accounts of ill-treatment, with Emmy Lomas's account (Vol. 23 No. 2, 2011) one of the most recent. With the exception of a few medical complications, if a mother has not had the sort of birth she wanted, it is the obstetrician who has FAILED to give her that.

Obstetricians have FAILED to prevent distress.

Obstetricians have FAILED to research or evaluate the dangers of their interventions and routine procedures.

AIMS has rightly questioned these procedures overthe years and research, e.g. into ultrasound, is well overdue. (Fortunately, when I had my three children at home – 1980, 1981 and 1984 – scanning was not even mentioned to me and so I did not even have to refuse it.) Also read what Marjorie Tew has to say about obstetricians' cunning dominance in her book Safer Childbirth: a critical history of maternity care.

To turn to lighter things, in the previous Journal (Vol. 23 No. 1, 2011), there was a letter from Wendy Pagler about a TV series' fictional birth. There have also been a few series on television which have had an episode featuring births NOT in a maternity ward:

- Men Behaving Badly – one of the episodes includes a home birth.
- The Vicar of Dibley – Alice gave birth on stage as part of a nativity play, with the audience saying it was very realistic.
- EastEnders – Bianca gave birth in the Queen Vic pub. I think there was an episode of Casualty a few years ago which included a home birth.

I was glad to see the ancient right to mine coal in the Forest of Dean for those born in the Hundred of St. Briavels (i.e. they need to be born at home) being mentioned in the series Great Railway Journeys on BBC2 on 18th January. The miner interviewed said they had the highest rate of home births there. Do they?

I found the whole Journal (Vol 23 No 4) inspiring, especially the articles on breech birth at home and twin birth at home. The article on 'Undisturbed birth' was excellent and thought-provoking and the article re overdue dates great. I arrived 24 days late, at home, of course. My husband was born about two weeks after his due date, but my own three children, born at home in the 1980s, all came before their due dates.

Keep up the good work.

Diana Beamish

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Dear AIMS

Have just started to read the journal and wanted to say congratulations to all on what looks to be a brilliant issue.

And well timed in the light of the recent terrible news about what has been going on at Barking, Havering and Redbridge – another huge unit formed by mergers – now reducing its number of births from 10,000 to 9,000...

Here's the link to the Independent article but I'm sure you will have seen the news
www.independent.co.uk/lifestyle/health-and-families/health-news/inspectors-findculture-of-abuse-in-nhs-trusts-maternity-services-2376931.html

Sarah