

Time to catch a baby -

or in other words -

Where the hell are the midwives?

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Well, I thought having a home birth with my wife would be a simple process.

Fact is, in the UK - less than 20% of parents Request homebirths, and less than 2% of these actually end up having a homebirth. Most are discouraged by the doctors or the hospitals, or other medical professionals.

This is in contrast to the current trend in the Netherlands, of about 30% homebirths.

We had already had one daughter - Jeorgina, who was home birthed two and a half years earlier, that had gone very well.

The only problem with that homebirth, was that the midwives arrived three hours after my original phone call, and just 40 minutes before my wife Julie birthed.

We had expected them to arrive less than twenty minutes after my call, as their office was just 10 minutes drive away.

Apparently they got held up sorting out paperwork and equipment for the labour, as it was not something they did very often.

This meant that Julie only had "gas and air" or "Entonox" pain relief for about 30 minutes before she birthed.

She had had to go through most of her labour with no pain relief at all, apart from self-hypnosis, which fortunately she was pretty accomplished at.

Considering this, she did exceptionally well for this first homebirth.

The sad fact is, that we have become

conditioned to believe that hospitals and doctors are essential for a safe, smooth and happy birthing experience.

The truth couldn't be farther from this.

The nature of hospitals and Doctors/Physicians is one of control and orderliness.

You'd be surprised, but it's not unusual for a birth plan to be set by the medical people, that includes a time by which the baby is "supposed" to be born. If this doesn't happen, then it is very common for the birth to be accelerated by using artificial hormones like "Oxytocin" to do this job.

The side effect is, that by the birth being speeded up, it often creates more pain/discomfort, and more fear and unease for the poor mother.

Not only this, but it continues the process of removing control of the birthing process away from the mother and into the hands of the "professionals".

I digress, back to our birth;-)

So this time, Julie had no pain relief at all, because the midwives took 45 minutes to make the five minute journey ;-)

Personally I think they stopped off for a cup of tea, as they thought they would have plenty of time.

So there we were at 04.30 am in the morning, and my wife had been labouring since 12.30 am

She had woken me up an hour or so earlier to tell me - "James I think the babies coming, I'm getting pretty strong contractions now."

We had a special room prepared just

for the labour, uncluttered and very comfortable. Julie had been sleeping alone in it every now and then, as she found she slept better without me in the same bed - she had more room to move around.

So she was already in this room for the night.

I got the things I thought would be needed, two or three fresh towels, and a waterproof drawsheet to cover the bed with.

I sat with her, encouraging her in the best way I knew how, and helping her to handle the contractions.

After a time, she said she wanted me to call the midwives, so I made the call.

Julie had asked me to tell them to get to us as quick as they could.

We both expected them to arrive within about 15 to 20 minutes or so.

No such luck ;-)

I made the call at 5.10 am.

Lots of grunting, puffing and pushing.

A bit of shouting here and there.

At 5.30 am Julie looked me straight in the eye, and said "the babies coming .. arghhhhhh... it's coming..."

There was no mistaking the desperation in her eyes.

And a moment later "It's coming, you better get ready...arghhhhh...."

So with no further ado, I got on my knees between my wife's legs.

By gum, there was the top of a head I could see!

Two more pushes and a moment later, out popped a slippery monster into my outstretched hands, warm, wet and very very wriggly.

I had a hard job keeping a hold.

Pink and beautiful. I lifted her up a moment later and gave her to her mum who immediately popped her onto her right breast and stroked her head.

The tears were streaming down both our faces, and we couldn't stop grinning from ear to ear.

We had twenty minutes of quiet time with our new daughter Samantha and each other. Not long later our other daughter Jeorgina woke and I got her up to introduce her to her new sister.

Twenty minutes after the birth, the doorbell rang, and I thought I would play a joke on the midwives.

I went downstairs, calmly opened the door, and said not a word about the birth. "How is she doing, is she OK?"

Fine I said, "I'll take you to her."

You should have seen the look on their faces when they realized they were too late!!

What a gas ;-)

They spent the next hour or so, making sure Julie was OK, checking over the new arrival, and filling out their very comprehensive notes in their files.

They actually had very little to do.

I have to say that they did take good care of Julie, making sure the afterbirth was delivered safely and that she didn't need any stitches and so on.

Why am I telling you our story?

Well the truth is, all the hogwash about hospitals and needing professionals is exactly that - hogwash.

If you make your mind up about how you want to run your life, and how you want to have your own birth to be, it really is up to you.

After all, all you have to do is ask, and then....

The rest is up to you.

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