

# Birth is 'stand and deliver'

A PS to our recent stories on birth the way you want it...

Birmingham mother Mrs Jean Marsland (25), brought baby Robin into the world by the "stand and deliver" method.

Jean joined a pilot project at Birmingham Maternity Hospital where mothers went walkabout during labour and to bed only for the birth.

Mothers who tried the method have voted it a stand-up success and the doctor who controlled the experiment is now working on keeping mothers upright for birth.

"It was so nice not to have the horrible experience of lying in the delivery room for hours on end," said Jean.

"I started walking around when my contractions were coming every 20 minutes. My husband was with me and I just wandered around the wards. When the contractions speeded up a bit more I still felt quite comfortable. I would just stop for a moment and lean on the side of a bed or table — and then carry on walking around."

Before her 2½-hour walk started Jean was wired up with electrodes to monitor her contractions and the unborn baby's heartbeat. She was given a portable transmitter — the size of a transistor — to sling over her shoulder.

This sent back information to a computer screen where midwives and doctors could keep Jean under observation.

"The birth was almost completely painless," said Jean. "My whole labour was like one of those films on childbirth where they take out all the bad bits."

PPS. A group of Dutch readers who followed the Home Birth v Hospital Birth series thought other Midweek readers might be interested in their birth experiences in Holland.

Home birth is a standard maternity service in Holland when the birth is expected to be normal. "It's better for the family if the baby is born at home," commented one young mother. "It involves the father and especially the other children

who might otherwise be jealous of the new baby."

Midwives check homes before the birth and nurses are employed in the home for two weeks after the birth.

Fathers are expected to support their wives during birth. If a woman has her baby in hospital because of birth problems, the husband can room in at the hospital and breakfast with his wife.

PPSS. Two mothers who had birth the way they wanted it have written to the Auckland Hospital Board to praise hospital staff.

One mother found staff at National Women's readily accepted her request that she be discharged three hours after the birth of her baby, provided there were no complications.

Another mother thanked staff at North Shore Obstetric Hospital and expressed her approval for hospital delivery, which she said was more "humanized" than the public cared to think.