

# HAVING A BABY AT HOME

Baby Alistair MacLeod upset his parents' careful plans as to where he would be born. But it wasn't in the usual way. He made his debut in hospital instead of at home as his mother had hoped.

His mother, Jane MacLeod of Ngaio is a firm supporter of home births. She is secretary of the Wellington Branch N.Z. Home Birth Association. Her background of interest goes back quite a way — to her own birth.

Her older sister was born at home in Johnsonville, by accident rather than design. A three-week early labour right on Christmas meant that the Johnsonville Maternity home had closed down and there was no time for a trip into Wellington.

"There were no motorways in those days" Jane MacLeod said.

"Then after my mother's experience with home birth she planned for my arrival to be at home."

When Jane MacLeod was

expecting her first child, with the help of the Home Birth Association, she made careful plans.

Planning a home birth is a family decision. The support and help of the father is essential. Midwife Lyn McLean sizes up a family situation, the women's mental and physical wellbeing, before making her decision about a home birth.

But her plans could not be carried out. Alistair was in the posterior position and both doctor and midwife decided he should be delivered in hospital.

Jane and Alistair compromised — and came home the same day he was born.

Jane MacLeod believes it is very important to ensure the climate for home births remains favourable.

"With so many country and local maternity homes closing down we believe it is important that there is an opportunity for personalised, intimate and natural childbirth" she said.

Other parents who plan a home birth can gain a lot from membership of the Home Birth Association.

The five month old Wellington Branch has 27 paid up members. Within the Onslow area, there have been six home births and five more are planned.

Members of the Association are able to share their experiences and help out at birth-times with child minding and home help. They also have get-togethers and dinners.

And for those who are interested in learning more about home births, Lyn McLean will lead a general discussion on home births at a meeting to be held on Tuesday October 2nd, at 10.30 a.m. in the Ngaio Plunket Rooms.

Alistair McLeod of Ngaio, aged 5½ months, with his mother Jane. Alistair upset his parents' best laid plans by being born in hospital, not at home.

