

GUEST EDITORIAL

Celebrating 30 years

Helen Manoharan

Inaugural Co-editor with Judy Hedwig



Helen Manoharan

This issue celebrates the 30th birthday of the New Zealand College of Midwives Journal and I feel highly privileged to be asked to write this editorial at such a significant time. We celebrate 30 years of providing an accessible source of scholarly articles on clinical midwifery sciences and current practice issues which are all rigorously peer reviewed, edited and printed, all contributing to midwifery knowledge development.

We knew we were a very special group then and we know we are a very special group now. Those “rebirth” midwifery days were monumental and have made a positive stand in the childbirth/midwifery history of New Zealand, of which I am very proud to have been a part.

We were phenomenally fortunate, particularly during the 1980s, to have global childbirth explorers who made a significant impact in the philosophy and practice of midwifery and childbirth. Our very own Joan Donley, and remember Michel Odent, Marsden Wagner, Murray Enkin, Sheila Kitzinger, Lesley Page, Wendy Savage? All of these and many others visited New Zealand to support our cause.

1989 was New Zealand midwifery’s year:

- the launch on 2nd April of the New Zealand College of Midwives, which for many years had been a shadow of the nursing profession
- the re-introduction of a separate midwifery education which commenced in Auckland and Dunedin
- Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, then the Minister of Health, successfully passed the first reading of the Nurses Amendment Bill Section 54 of the Nurses Act which would allow midwives to practise independently of medical supervision
- Joan Donley was awarded an OBE for her services to midwifery as she opened the door to ensure there was an effective midwifery service for future generations
- The launch of the New Zealand College of Midwives Journal in September 1989. The first issue was co-edited with Judy Hedwig, who was pure inspiration; we were all very grateful for her vision and input.

The Journal now gave the College a voice, which was soon heard. The first issue had an immediate response from the medical profession, with a notable obstetrician challenging statements made (with help from the legal profession).

Publishing has been revolutionised during the past 30 years, mainly due to technological advances – it seems hard to believe now how we struggled with chunky computers and no internet! Everything was typed, checked and rechecked. It was a slow process. All the graphics and Journal covers were hand drawn (no electronic illustrator then) and continual pleas were put out to advertisers to buy space to help cover the printing costs.

So many excellent original articles were printed, with some of the regular contributors being Karen Guilliland, Sally Pairman, Joan Donley, Bronwen Pelvin, Cheryl Benn, Alison Stewart, Sarah Stewart and many more. Often photographs were submitted by Glenda Stimpson. So many amazing, talented midwives.

The next process was to await the printer’s call, instructing us to collect the “galley prints” which were edited, rearranged, checked – again rearranged – and with no internet this meant a few trips to the printers to get it right. We went through three printers in my time as we wore out all of them!

Once in print the Journals were loaded into the car and the two-day job of unloading, packing, sealing, labelling and delivering at NZ Post commenced. Help was commandeered from anywhere and everywhere. In the later stages (with the promise of wine and nibbles) it became a debating ground for the local midwives. While the packing, labelling and boxing was underway, heated debates would erupt and childbirth and midwifery issues were opened out and solutions debated. Good friendships were sealed over these events.

One article, *Six Myths that can Lead Us Astray* by Professor Emeritus Murray Enkin (Issue 11) is as true today as it was in 1994, as he tried to raise our collective consciousness about common but invalid assumptions that can lead us astray:

- Association means causation
- If everyone believes it, it must be true
- Prevention is always better than cure
- The myth of the magic bullet
- The myth of authority
- Experience is the best teacher

There has never been so much evidence-based credible research covering women’s health and childbirth being completed in the world as there is today and, thanks to professional Journals like this, there is widespread dissemination of the results for us all to use. We remain indebted to you all.

Here’s to the next action packed 30 years!

Helen was the Journal’s editor for the first 21 issues, 1989-1999.

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