



Message from the Chair of the Executive Committee



Well what a busy few months this has been. As I write, it has gone past 10pm and I have a cup of tea going cold, but this seems to be the norm at the moment! The BTA is getting busier and busier and our workload is increasing further as we continue to raise awareness and receive more media publicity. We even had a mention on the front page of the Telegraph back in February! See page 4 of this newsletter for further details of that.

We continue to have an amazing team of volunteers, working hard in all areas of work and supporting people who contact us for help, however, we still have much more work to do and we're looking for other members to take on a more active role by joining the Executive Committee. If you feel you could go that extra mile to help please get in touch.

I have recently applied to join the MSLC at my local hospital. I'm looking forward to working with them to raise awareness of birth trauma and prevent it happening in the first place, more news to follow on that.

Well, I must sign off now and drink my cold tea. Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any concerns, issues or comments, my email address is:

jules@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

Until next time!

Jules - BTA Chair



Write to us at:

The Birth Trauma Association
PO Box 671
IP1 9AT

Internet:

www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

Email:

enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

BTA meets with Liam Byrne MP

We were lucky enough to be invited to a **Ministerial Q&A session** organised by the APPG for maternity services.



So imagine our delight when **Liam Byrne MP** agreed to meet with the BTA to discuss the groundbreaking training programme that Emma is pioneering in East Sussex!

After one false start the Executive Committee arrived at the Department of Health on May 2nd accompanied by **Nicky Mason**, Specialist Midwife, Practice Development & **Debra Young**, Head of Maternity Services, both from East Sussex NHS trust and fully armed with briefing notes (available on the BTA website) and BTA badges.

After the usual security sweep we had a whole 45mins with the Minister and Ann Barker & Jill Demilow from the Department of Health and we were able to explain the aims & work of the BTA as well as go through the purpose & results of the training to date and our partnership with East Sussex NHS trusts.

I've been to quite a few Ministerial meetings of different kinds and can honestly say that this was an incredibly productive meeting both in terms of the awareness we've now raised within the Department of Health about PN PTSD and the personal interest of the Minister.



From Left to Right: Maureen Treadwell, Julie Orford, Nilmini de Silva, Liam Byrne MP, Emma Cuppini, Debra Young and Nicky Mason



BTA meets with Liam Byrne MP (cont'd)

Each member of the BTA team had a good chance to explain their involvement and the work that they undertake for the BTA. Emma had the opportunity to showcase the training programme and seized it with gusto!

Ann Barker and Jill Demilow were also very encouraging in terms of the BTA contributing in future NHS work and had some useful ideas to move the training programme forward.

Hopefully this will mean that the BTA is now firmly on the list of organisations that are contacted by the Department of Health when they review policy or research maternity services.

This is a huge step towards where we would like to be as we believe that women who have suffered from traumatic births are currently totally unrepresented in the policymaking process. **Watch this space!**

Nilmini de Silva
BTA Parliamentary Officer

New BTA Leaflet being produced

We are in the process of creating a new leaflet with more general information about the BTA. This new leaflet would ideally be handed out via hospitals and GP surgeries.



The new leaflet would also contain general advice on dealing with a disappointing/traumatic birth plus details on symptoms to look out for that might indicate developing PND or PTSD. It would also include information on when to get more detailed help and where from.

We are currently looking for sponsorship for the printing of these leaflets so any ideas, **please let us know!**

East Sussex Training Update

The training that **Emma Cuppini** is undertaking in East Sussex continues to go very well. Average attendance is now up to around 9 – 10 midwives per session. Emma has now had feedback and the evaluation scores for the training are high and the response positive. The midwives feel that this is appropriate training and very valuable.

Emma continues to collate their responses on best practice, with the aim of summarising this and producing something for the Trusts at the end of the year.

Nicky Mason and **Emma** will be looking, amongst other things, at how they can measure outcomes of this training in a demonstrable way.

One of the Trust's leading obstetricians is scheduled to attend the training later this month.

Emma is now in the process of organising training for the Supervisors of Midwives on dealing with trauma and debriefing and hoping to set something up with **Mary Hopper**.

Other East Sussex News

Emma Cuppini has been invited to give a presentation to the obstetricians, gynaecologists and obstetric anaesthetists at the **East Sussex Hospitals Trust** on birth trauma which is currently planned for September. Emma will also be giving a presentation to a local SureStart team in early June, so will continue to raise awareness wherever and whenever she can.

Emma will also be attending the East Sussex Hospitals Trust MSLC meeting in June and will be meeting with Debra Young and Nicky Mason from the Trust, also in June, to discuss next steps in the planned work development programme. Emma will be proposing the formation of a small working group to look at ways of developing an outline mental health strategy for maternity.



Self Esteem/Confidence Training

Something More Training is holding a 2 day course for women in self esteem & confidence.

Self Esteem/Confidence Training

24th and 25th June 2006

10.00am-5.00pm

Glemham Hall, Woodbridge, Suffolk

£150 for the 2 days including all meals and refreshments

www.glemhamhall.co.uk

Donna Lancaster and Amanda Webb-Heath are 2 dynamic and creative trainers with extensive experience in the field of raising self-esteem and building confidence.

Over the 2 days you will:

- Increase your confidence and gain practical tools to raise your self esteem.
- Explore and let go of negative thought patterns for behavioural change.
- Recognise and transform limiting beliefs into empowering ones.
- Release negativity and create balance in your life.
- Create more harmonious relationships that will enrich you and others.
- Develop a toolbox of skills to equip you for positive life changes.
- Clarify where you are going in your life and gain the skills to get there faster.

To make an enquiry or to book a place, please call **Donna** on **07843 687738** or email: Info@somethingmore.wanadoo.co.uk

BTA Helpline ideas

We have been approached by some volunteers who are willing to offer a telephone support service between certain hours of the day, rather like the Birth Crisis Network. If you feel you could be a volunteer telephone supporter, please get in contact with **Jules** for further details.

NEW BTA Badges!

We have just taken stock of our new **BTA badges**. The BTA is a voluntary organisation so we rely on donations and funding from other sources to continue our work.



We hope that the badges will not only help to raise our funds but also to raise awareness of birth trauma and the work that we do. Anyone who donates **£2.50 or more** will now receive one of our badges to show their support.

The badges are 1mm thick, with a blue enamel fill, silver nickel plating with a butterfly clutch pin. Size 25mm in height.

It would be fantastic if we could get professionals to wear them too to show their support of our organisation. If you are a professional who would like a bulk order for your team, please get in touch.

To donate online please visit our website: <http://www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk/donate.htm>

Intrapartum care guideline to be published this year

The BTA are stakeholders and members of the guideline development team of this **NICE** (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence) guidance which is to be published in draft form for comment this summer and is likely to be enormously controversial.

This guideline will be hugely influential and we really need to make sure it is right! We would love to have your comments and views so that we can represent them to **NICE**.

You can view the guidance from July of this year by logging on to www.nice.org.uk and searching 'Intrapartum Care'.



Front Page in the Telegraph

The Birth Trauma Association was front page news in the Telegraph on the **23rd February** this year!



We were alarmed by the **Royal College of Midwives'** conference suggestion that women should be forced to pay for any epidurals which they considered 'unnecessary'. Not surprisingly, we strongly opposed the suggestion.

Only the woman herself can decide whether she wants pain relief and the idea that access to pain relief should depend on disposable income was terrible! We received overwhelming support including a leader article in the Times. As a result, the Royal College of Midwives changed the wording of their motion.

Annie Davidson, one of our members, was interviewed about this on **Woman's Hour on 4th May**. You can listen to the programme and hear what Annie and the midwives had to say by logging on to the BBC website and searching Woman's Hour.

Induction of Labour

This guideline is being reviewed and will be available for comment next summer. If you have comments about induction, please let us know.

Induction sometimes leads to traumatic labours and crash caesareans and we receive lots of correspondence from women who are clearly psychologically damaged by the experience.

- Are women given enough choice?
- Should they be offered elective caesareans if they want them to avoid the much greater danger of emergency caesareans?
- What are the dangers of 'wait and see'?
- Are women given enough information?

Let us know what you think.

Meeting with Health Select Chair

The BTA were delighted when the newly appointed Chair of the influential Commons Health Select Committee, **Kevin Barron MP**, responded to our letter requesting a meeting. Maureen and Nilmini went to Westminster on 27th February to meet with him and the Clerk to the Committee.

Commons departmental committees are responsible for scrutinising the expenditure, administration and policy of the relevant department and associated public bodies. They can be quite independent and critical of government on occasion and are able to choose their areas of inquiry. The committees are made up of proportional numbers of MPs from each party & usually have 11 members who take oral and written evidence & sometimes visit key sites. This evidence is then used by the committee to write a report which the Government must reply to.

Our initial idea of requesting the committee investigate maternity services was scuppered because their last report on Maternity services was only in July 2003 (for those interested it can be found together with the Government response here):

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmhealth/cmhealth.htm>

However Maureen and Nilmini were able to give a thorough introduction to the **BTA** and our perspective and answer questions from Mr Barron on how we feel the situation could be improved. Mr Barron & the Clerk invited us to submit evidence to their current investigation into NHS workforce planning which can be viewed at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmhealth/1077/1077we10.htm>

This meeting was a great opportunity to speak to one of the key people in Parliament on Health matters and the best news is that now the committee clerk will notify us of further investigations which we could submit evidence to and really get our voice out there - **watch this space!**



Media Volunteers Urgently needed!

The BTA urgently needs more women prepared to speak to the media about their experiences of childbirth trauma.



Getting the message into the press, on TV and radio is the most effective way that you can help to bring about change.

Please can you email enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk with a two or three line summary of what happened and your telephone number.

We are getting two or three press enquiries a day at present and have almost completely run out of volunteers!

Support for Women

Hilary Field is a midwife and clinical hypnotherapist specialising in treating women who have suffered traumatic childbirth experiences. She is offering a series of FREE sessions to a small number of women who feel they would benefit from treatment.

These sessions would normally cost at least £55.00 each and Hilary is offering up to six sessions to each person – a wonderful offer!

Hilary operates from Devizes so you will need to be within travelling distance but if you think you could benefit and would like more information, please email us at:

enquiries@birthtraumaassociation.org.uk

Donations Thank you!

We have recently received some wonderful donations through the post and via our website. **Thank you** so much to all those people who have been able to support the work of the BTA by donating some money, your help is very much appreciated and ensures we can continue with our work. **Thank you from us all!**

BTA awarded over £3,120 by the National Lottery

The BTA was given a new award on the 9th January to fund its **Midwifery Training Project** which Emma Cuppini is organising in East Sussex.

This project is proving to be hugely successful and hopefully we will be able to encourage the Department of Health to fund a nationwide scheme aimed at improving midwives' understanding of birth trauma and how to prevent it.

All Wales Midwifery and Reproductive Health Research Forum

Nilmini has been invited along in July to one of the meetings of the All Wales Midwifery and Reproductive Health Research Forum to talk about the work of the Birth Trauma Association.

The group is representative of clinical and research expertise, which generates lively discussion and sharing of ideas. More news to follow in the next newsletter.

BTA Website Update

The BTA website continues to receive over **6,000 unique visitors** a month (and this figure is still rising!). We have recently added a new section to the site to enable us to take donations as well as restructuring some of the pages to make things easier to find.

If you have any ideas for things we could add to the website or have any comments, please let us know.



Write to us at:

The Birth Trauma Association
PO Box 671
IP1 9AT

Internet:

www.birthtraumaassociation.org.uk