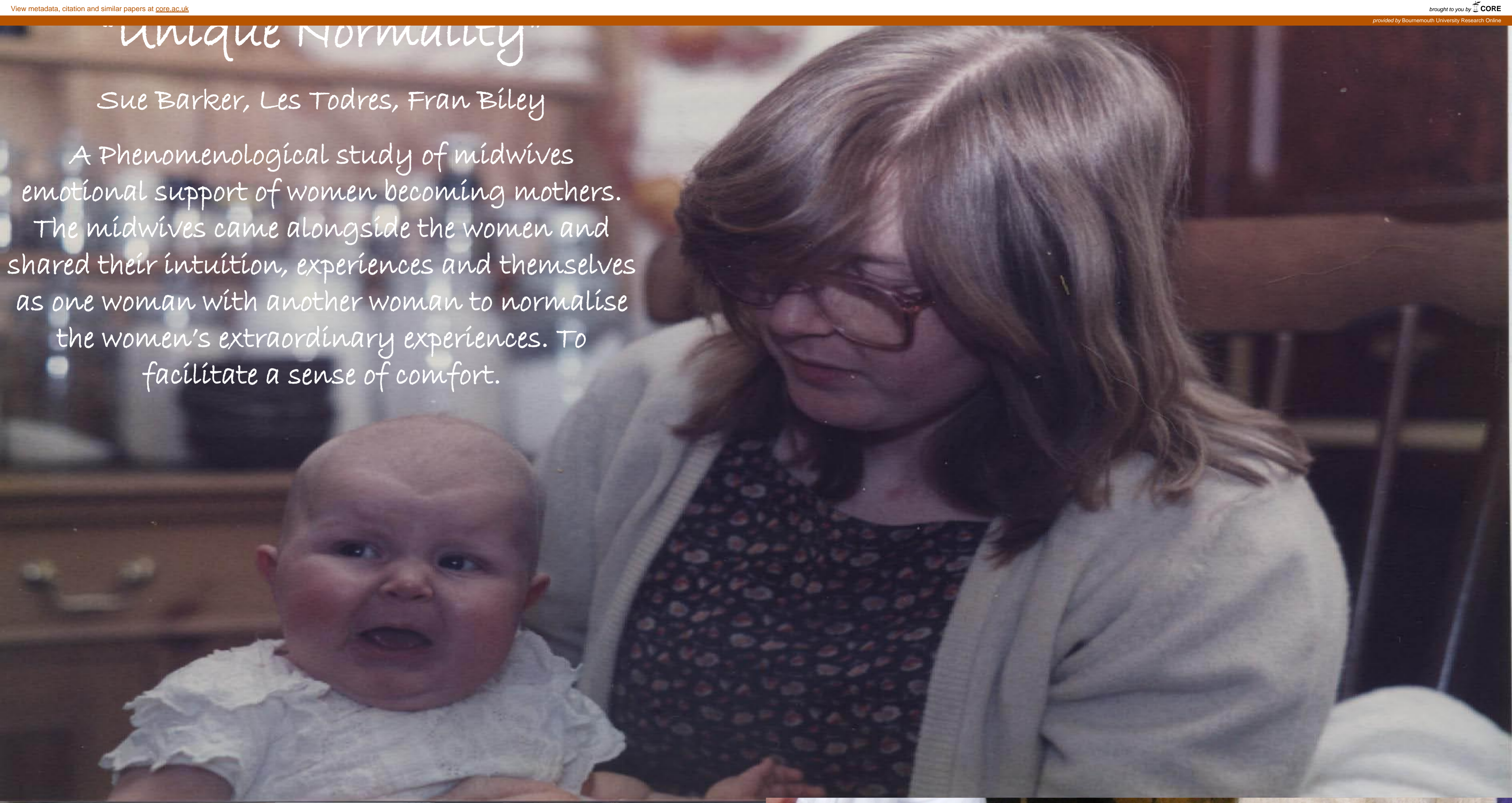


Unique Normality

Sue Barker, Les Todres, Fran Biley

A Phenomenological study of midwives emotional support of women becoming mothers. The midwives came alongside the women and shared their intuition, experiences and themselves as one woman with another woman to normalise the women's extraordinary experiences. To facilitate a sense of comfort.



Using Giorgi's (1997) Psychological Phenomenology to explore the lifeworld experiences of community midwives.

It was found that emotional support was part of midwives' emotional care in which they extensively used themselves to come alongside and be with the women to provide them with comfort.



Downe developed the concept of 'unique normality' related to birth experiences she says it should be seen as "an ordinary drama - not a crisis and not as a routine event, but as a one off exciting event, full of possibility" (Downe 2006: 354). The midwives in this study appeared to be trying to achieve this unique normality for the women for whom they were giving emotional care. They approached the journey as a unique experience for each woman but they also tried to provide the women with a sense that their experiences were normal to reduce expressed or anticipated emotional distress.

Downe, S., 2006. Engaging with the concept of unique normality in childbirth. *British Journal of Midwifery*, 1 (6), 352-356.

Giorgi, A., 1997. The Theory, Practice, and Evaluation of The Phenomenological Method as a Qualitative Research Procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 28, no 2, 235-260