

Once upon a time...



Crowds through the gates of Buckingham Palace where a golden easel displays the announcement of the birth (inset)

up the latest developments.

Except, of course, there weren't any. Or rather, none that we were told about. "At least she's got air-con in there," sighed one presumably childless snapper, staring up at the windows of the maternity wing, on London's hottest day in seven years.

At least he was being paid to swelter. Not so the likes of veteran royal fan Terry Hutt, 78, who had already been in position for 11 days, sleeping rough and watching the hospital in shifts with other royal die-hards for fear of missing anything worthy of a flag wave.

As the airless afternoon dragged on, the checking of watches

became increasingly neurotic. Air time and column inches had to be filled, and we all wondered how no news could ever be good news.

If only we had known that Kate had already been delivered of a beautiful baby boy, shortly before half past four. Instead, having been told by Kensington Palace that the "theatre" of the birth announcement would only take place in daylight hours, we found ourselves willing the sun to stay in the sky.

But then, at 19.57 precisely, we received another email. Under the subject heading, "Alteration to the timing of the announcement of birth," it read: "A formal press release containing details of the

birth will be issued shortly, before the formal signed Bulletin leaves the hospital from the front steps of the Lindo Wing."

In other words, it was game on – just in time for the evening news and the first editions of tomorrow's papers.

It started with a "ping" into the smartphones of the chosen few with palace press privileges. "The Duchess of Cambridge has been delivered of a son," read the message. The Duke of Cambridge was present for the birth of the 8lbs 6oz baby and the Queen was said to be "delighted".

Her Majesty wasn't the only one. Squeals of delight greeted

the Cambriges' press secretary, Ed Perkins, as he emerged from the Lindo Wing and handed a red, leather-bound folder, bearing the Buckingham Palace crest, to the driver of a blacked-out Jaguar. Inside the folder was the announcement that the world at large had been longing to read.

By the time the chauffeur-driven notice had made its two-mile journey from Paddington to Buckingham Palace, the crowd was 10-deep outside the gates. The car went through and we waited some more. But then the Queen's press secretary appeared with a royal footman, bearing the precious A4 sheet