

Alison & Carl's birth story

Holly was 7lb, 3ozs when she was born at 5.00am on the 8th August. I was 20 days past my due date of the 19th July but I had the natural birth I wanted without being induced. I had a brilliant labour and birth, feel quite positive and proud it went so well, not like the painful births I have heard people talk about or on the TV. I do not consider my labour or birth painful in any way and would not be afraid to go through the experience again. My labour was 13 hours in total. At the beginning I started to get mild contractions and was not sure if it was the start of labour or not. I went to the supermarket to get shopping in case and got up to date on my house work. I was cooking a dinner and eating at 9.00pm though I was not able to finish eating my dinner because I had to concentrate on my contractions by this time. I began to use a TENS machine at about 10.30pm until about 3.00am when I got into the birth pool. When my contractions became more intense I wanted to hold onto some big cushions for comfort for reassurance. I did not want a birth ball or to be touched or massaged. I just wanted to concentrate on my contractions without distraction and did not need to use any music or scented candles. I just wanted it very quiet with the lights out. Near the end of my labour before I got into the pool I was having contractions on my bed under the sheet kneeling like a cat and holding my pillows. I think this must have become my "baobab tree" though I was not thinking this at the time and the lights were off in the bedroom. Carl was ringing Eleanor [midwife] to come over after 2/2.30am as he realised my labour was starting to change and I realised that she would need to come as I started to get the urge to push. Until this time I just wanted to be on my own to get on with my contractions and thought it would be going on for a lot longer as I thought the contractions were supposed to get more intense than I was experiencing. It was calming to be in the birth pool and have the soothing warm water. I stayed in the pool until Holly was born. I felt like I was out of my comfort zone near the end of the labour when I could feel Holly's head in my pelvis but I would not describe it as a pain. I remembered to take some long out breaths to help me through it. It was amazing to see a baby at the end when she was passed to me almost unbelievable that my body had grown her/a miracle.

In summary I think I had a good labour and birth because it was quiet and dark and this helped me to zone out and not worry about being watched as there was also only Carl and the midwives. I did not need to use gas and air but it was definitely helpful to use a TENS machine on my back. Also having a homebirth must have been a big contribution to my having a good experience

because I felt relaxed in my own surroundings. It was helpful to remember to take long out-breaths. Attending your courses, listening to the Natal Hypnotherapy CDs and reading some books challenged my beliefs about birth, helped me in my pregnancy. Some of the books that helped me were Ina May Gaskin's Spiritual Midwifery, Effective Birth Preparation by Maggie Howell & Birth Without Fear by Dick Read.

It is a challenge having a baby to look after but we both love and adore her and are very glad that we have her.

from Alison & Carl xxx