

## Charlotte & Andy's birth story – Amelie's birth

The birth of our first daughter was difficult. I got to fully dilated on my own but needed a hospital transfer for the pushing part which ended with forceps and a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree episiotomy/tear. I was worried how my body would cope the second time so booked the hypnobirthing course to help me feel less anxious and to give me coping strategies for labour. I particularly found the course helpful for relaxing and for the massage techniques and I did feel less anxious after doing the course.

Our second daughter was a very quick surprise home birth in our shower room 3 days before her due date. Amelie was born 11.30am 13th April, weighing 8lb.



My waters had gone around 4.30am and then at 7am I phoned labour line to be told don't come to New Forest Birth Centre until 4pm unless contractions come along regularly. So I listened to my hypnobirthing tracks whilst plodding around the house to help keep me calm and focused. (Luckily our daughter was staying at my in-laws the night before, otherwise I might have felt more stressed.) I texted my mum - my 2nd birth partner - to keep her informed but at 10.30am said to come round if bored. Lucky I did that! A contraction wave came over my body about 10.50am so I thought I'd better time it. It then went away for about 5 mins or so. Andy was out in

the garden at this point. Mum arrived at 11ish then when I saw her I had a huge contraction and was doubled over with the strength of it. Mum got Andy to call Labour Line and Mum was like, "I think bubs is on her way". I felt like I needed a bowel movement. I staggered to the toilet and managed to go, and then I could feel bulging. Mum looked and said baby was on her way. At that point Andy came in the bedroom to say we can leave for Ashurst, only for me to say, "No we're not, we need an ambulance!" I had mixed feelings at that point worrying if baby would be ok, what happens if something is wrong with her/me, can I get her out ok without too much damage (after a 3rd degree tear last time)? I was doubled up in pain and trying to pant/blow as much as possible. I quickly threw some towels on the floor and got on all fours. I then heard a cry, looked down thinking she has been born, for Mum to say, "Her head's out and she looks cute." Then with another push, my body doing the work, she was born; a good colour and crying well. Mum caught her whilst Andy was watching, on the phone to the ambulance.



It felt like ages before the ambulance crew arrived. In the meantime I was leaning against the shower room door frame and under the sink. Once I had gas and air for the placenta I was able to get onto the bed. A midwife and her student came, so it was cosy in bedroom with lots of people. The ambulance guys enjoyed playing with the dog downstairs. From the first contraction to Amelie being born was about 40 minutes. We had to go to Princess Anne hospital as I had a 2nd degree tear and to check blood loss. Luckily we only stayed 1 night. Amelie had a tongue-tie and then thrush so took a good 4 weeks to get back to her birth weight but she is now nearly 5 months and has a great set of thighs on her.

I found what we learned on the hypnobirthing course really useful during the pregnancy to help me feel calmer and less anxious. I put some affirmations up on my mirror to help keep me focused and prepared for the birth. The labour was so fast I didn't get much chance to use the techniques, but it helped keep me calm to listen to the downloads after my waters went while I was waiting for labour to begin, and I used my breathing to help me cope when it got so intense so quickly and when it was clear that Amelie was on her way!

