

Margret, Ian and Charlie's Birth Story



I know childbirth isn't easy for everyone, but it was for me. My maternal Grandmother had 5 babies in 5 years and said it was just easy as shelling peas.

The day I entered labour, I had gone grocery shopping in the afternoon and it seemed that either the baby had got much heavier or I had been standing and walking around for too long.

At about 6pm I had my bloody show but as it was so minor I couldn't be sure, so I showed my husband, Ian. Look, what do you think?? do you think there's any blood in that? That was the only thing he gagged at all night. Being the type to get queasy at the sight of blood, we both thought he might end up on the floor or laying on the couch at some point during our delivery, but no, he didn't miss a beat.

I continued doing what I was doing - cooking dinner, not thinking too much about it, not wanting to get excited, we weren't due for another 9 days, and as it was our first baby we expected to go past our due date. I wasn't at all nervous. I knew there was nothing I could do except let things play out. Ian had such an awful day at work that day (a Monday) that he said he hoped the baby would come that night so he wouldn't have to go to work the next day. Charlie did come that night, Daddy's boy.

After dinner I sat on the birthing ball instead of a chair at the dining table reading on my Laptop. Around 9 o'clock I felt the slightest of contractions. I never felt my Braxton Hicks, I only knew I had them by feeling the hardness of my stomach with my hands, so this was different and I checked the time. I thought I should see how long it lasts and how long between, if I get another. The sensation was so mild that I had forgotten about it before my last thought was finished. I only realised I had forgotten about it when I noticed I was having another, 8 minutes later. About five minutes after that my waters broke.

We rang our wonderful midwife and she told us to go to bed and get some rest, she'd be round early in the morning. We watched our favourite TV show instead, Ian sitting on the couch, me on the ball.

I started timing my contractions with my iPhone's stopwatch (I haven't reset it and I still have my 'laps'). Looking at it now, my contractions started out around 30 to 40 seconds long and were about 2 to 2 and a half minutes apart. We had been told not to ring until the contractions were long and strong and four minutes apart. At two minutes apart my contractions were closer together than that, but because they weren't long or strong we didn't think it was time to call. By the end of the show, the contractions were stronger and I couldn't concentrate on what the actors were saying when I would have one, I just rolled my hips around on the ball and wondered how I would go trying to sleep through them.

Just in case, we thought we'd set up the birth pool and half fill it (I'm glad we did), and I wanted to clean up and do the dishes. While doing to dishes and Ian was vacuuming I realised we wouldn't be going to bed. I sent Ian to the 24 hour BP to get maternity pads. Believing we still had a couple of weeks to go I hadn't got everything on the list we were supposed to have. I laid on my side on the bed while Ian was away, circling my legs through the contractions.

Of course BP didn't have maternity pads, so I rang my Mum. We finally decided to ring the midwife about quarter to 12, and she arrived just before midnight. My mum arrived shortly after with the pads. We wanted as few people possible at the birth and it was not planned for my Mum to be there (she had also said she preferred not to be there).

We finished filling up the pool and the midwife suggested I hop in. I did. I was glad to be in the water; when I was in the water the contractions didn't feel so bad. Then I felt like I wanted to do number two's so I was

helped out of the pool and through our bedroom to the toilet. I sat on the toilet and my next contraction felt different, a lot more intense, that one kinda hurt.

Maybe that's when I transitioned, I don't know, but I knew a number 2 was not coming and all I wanted to do was get back in the pool.

Back in the pool it all felt manageable again. Ian was on the couch behind me and my midwife and my Mum at the pool edge in front of me, I was squatting, one knee up one knee down. I wasn't vocalising much, just a sort of a low moan at the top of my contractions. We had the pool set up in the lounge room, but we lived in a one bedroom flat, all the lights were off except the light in the bathroom from when I hopped out. It was shining in my eyes and I wanted it turned off. It was distracting. I didn't have any music playing either. I had made a playlist but couldn't imagine playing it.

In between contractions Mum was trying to be helpful and told me not to think about the pain of the next contraction, I got a little annoyed, I wasn't thinking about the next one and I didn't want to be reminded. Mum took a smoke break.



I went in to that cone of silence where you lose your outward awareness. I was just working my way through my contractions with my forehead resting on the edge of the pool. Then I could smell smoke and asked if my Mum was there. She was, she had come back in and been sitting in the

corner. The second midwife had arrived as well. They asked me if I wanted my Mum to leave. I did, but I didn't want to say. I danced around the question trying to say yes but not wanting to hurt my Mum's feelings. I should have just said yes, because Mum was relieved. She wasn't enjoying listening to me in labour, feeling like there was nothing she could do to help make it any easier. She didn't know how to say she

didn't want to be there and I didn't know how to say I'd prefer she wasn't there.

I continued in the pool, using a flannel dipped in ice water to make circles over my face through contractions (I gave myself quiet the facial) and drinking water. At some point I got slightly bored and thought I'd have a little feel down there. I felt something soft, the midwives said it would be the membranes, and told me to stick my finger in and I should be able to feel the baby's head. They expected me to stick most of my finger in. When they asked me how far in I went I pointed to the depth of my fingernail, they were surprised and said the baby would be here much sooner than they expected. Then we ran out of drinking water.

We had already run out of ice. If my flannel wasn't ice cold I could take it, but if I had to drink tap water I would not have been happy. Ian was sent off to BP again, this time for water, he was told to hurry, really hurry, or he might miss the birth. We wished we'd thought to ask Mum to get us some water when she left.

Ian got back from BP and six minutes later Charlie was born just after 2am. On one contraction the head was out and on the next Charlie was born in to the waiting hands of his father. I love that Ian was the first to hold him.

It was all over so quickly and easily I think I went in to shock. After five minutes I asked what sex he was, fully expecting a girl. I didn't believe Ian when he told me we had a boy, and made him show me his bits. Yep, they were boy bits. I really was in shock. I had been so wrong with my 'knowing' that Charlie was a girl.

I birthed the placenta in the pool and was helped to the couch for a lie down and to put Charlie to the breast.

I could end my story here, it all went perfectly, but I had more blood loss than they like, and two hours after delivery while lying on the couch trying to get Charlie to latch on I started to feel yuk. Ian took the baby to the bedroom and had a good chance to bond with him in the glow of the salt lamp, and I flaked out. I was given oxygen which brought me to a few times and an injection of oxytocin in the leg. I was on the verge of being transferred to the hospital, I'm so grateful I avoided that!



I feel so blessed by the whole experience and I am really proud of my body for the magic it performed. I was really just along for the ride, my body pushed our baby out all by itself. Our midwives were fantastic, allowing me to really do everything on my own just the way I wanted, no interference. I had no internal checks, no monitors strapped on, no hindrance. Of course they were there, ready to act if needs be, but they gave me the gift of freedom, the space to zone out and just let nature take its course.

I am also very grateful for the excellent after-care I

received on the CMWA program. We couldn't have asked for better and I believe my breastfeeding journey would have been over early if not for their care and support. I love my midwives and I love the CMWA!