

## Noah's Birth

Lauren Smith – for [www.birthinangus.org.uk](http://www.birthinangus.org.uk)

My beautiful son Noah Oliver Harry Smith was born on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2010 at 06.22 weighing 7lb 12.5oz at Montrose Maternity Unit (MMU). Here I explain his rollercoaster of a birth!

During my pregnancy and whilst reading all the info, I quickly decided I wanted a water birth at Montrose. I had also heard such positive stories about both the birthing pool and the amazing midwives that work there and of course being born there myself had an influence!



Throughout my pregnancy I kept very well, in fact so well I was able to keep working up until the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2010, 4 days before I actually gave birth!

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> September I went for lunch with friends to Charleton Farm and in the evening made a big lasagne for tea for me and my mum. Friends were round and after a lovely evening I went to bed around midnight feeling absolutely fine. At around 2am, I got up to the toilet (as a pregnant woman does!) and felt the need to take paracetamol. I couldn't sleep and about 3am I felt uncomfortable and decided to take a bath. Whilst running the bath, my mum woke up and asked if everything was ok. Explaining how I felt mum decided she would be better getting up and dressed.

Several baths later there was a lack of hot water so I had to resort to a hot water bottle whilst trying to watch TV to take my mind off of the pain. When I say trying, I was up to the toilet every 10 minutes - and boy did my mum know, as I was complaining I wanted a commode to sit on so that I didn't have to keep getting up and down! At around 5am, as my pains seemed to be coming very quickly, mum decided to give the midwife a call, who told her to bring me in.

Arriving at MMU at approximately 5.50am, I was greeted by Alison who took me down to the examination room to monitor my pain and contractions. After several minutes, she asked if she could give me a VE (vaginal examination) as my contractions were coming regularly but didn't appear as intense as expected and were only lasting a short while. As I settled on the bed and Alison was examining me she asked my mum to have a look, only for mum to find out she could see the baby's head! Telling me this, I then asked, "So how far dilated am I?" The reply was, 10cm of course! With Alison rushing off to fill the birthing pool, I waddled down to the labour room and quickly got into the puddle of water in the pool as this is all we had time for. After around 3 pushes my son Noah entered the world at 06.22.

All was fabulous for a short while, photos were being taken, text messages sent and phone calls made but this was not to last. Around 20 minutes after giving birth I was still in a severe amount of pain, asking for gas and air AFTER going through labour and giving birth without any pain relief, and I was also bleeding quite heavily. Alison came to have a look and gave me a stitch to stop the bleeding, and some pain relief. This seemed to work at first but after attempting to have a shower Mum, Anne (my mum's best friend) and the midwives realised all was not right. A frantic phone call to Ninewells Hospital confirmed that and before I could have my much needed cup of tea, I was rapidly being prepared for the ambulance journey.

Leaving my newly born son Noah in MMU, Julie accompanied me in the ambulance whilst mum, Anne and Sarah respectively went home to retrieve the car seat, get Anne's bigger car and dress Noah to follow us through. Mum realised how scared I was, so SOS'd my Auntie Dawn, who lives in Forfar, to head to Ninewells to meet the

ambulance there. Seeing her waiting outside the labour suite at Ninewells was a great relief and knowing she was there, although she isn't a big fan of blood and albeit with her head between her knees, reassured and comforted me.

On arriving at Ninewells, things didn't slow down any. I was whisked straight into theatre, given a spinal block and had my nail polish removed from my newly painted fingernails! Thereafter time seemed to pass in a blur, however I was thankful for that as I felt the faster this happened the sooner I would be reunited with my son.

Coming round in the afternoon I expected my baby son to be beside me but where was he? In the coffee shop on the concourse with my mum, Anne, Auntie and Uncle! After a quick phone call he was back and I was able to give him a much needed feed which he totally appreciated. Being on bed rest with lots of intravenous infusions, which appeared to be in every vein, limited my ability to care for my son – other than feed him of course! I remained in Intensive Care for a few days which unfortunately meant no visitors other than my birthing partner. However she (mum) was going for an operation the following day meaning I would have no visitors. Luckily my Auntie Dawn and mum look very alike, so she was able to organise a day's annual leave and substitute for her. With her by my bedside, family and friends and the Montrose midwives phoning regularly to check on my condition, I never felt alone.

After 3 days I was transferred up to the post natal ward, and boy was it different. I was used to one-to-one care and suddenly found myself in a bay with 5 other mums, babies and one midwife. The only advantage being I was able to have visitors. It was lovely watching my loved ones meet Noah for the first time. Determined to get back on my feet so I could return to Montrose, I constantly harassed the midwife to assist me with my walking until I managed myself. My bloods were checked every morning until my haemoglobin had increased. Hurray! After two days it was confirmed I could go.

My grandparents collected me from Ninewells, as my mum was unable to drive due her surgery, and brought me and Noah back to MMU. My first steps outside of Ninewells felt amazing, sunlight and fresh air! Noah and I slept the whole journey back. Fortunately I was able to get visitors that night, so my friends were able to come and meet Noah.

With breastfeeding going so well and Noah and I both doing brilliantly, after a few days we were finally allowed to go home.

Three months on Noah is thriving and is such a happy and contented baby despite the rollercoaster he was on from birth. I am thoroughly enjoying breastfeeding and I have such an incredible bond with my son and we are just so happy!

I just want to thank all the midwives at MMU for the terrific care I received before and after Noah's birth. My whole experience has been incredible, including the traumatic trip to Ninewells. On reflection I feel I have learned so much personally – emotionally, psychologically and physically.

You truly are amazing. Thank you all very much.

Lauren Smith

