

## **Ethan's birth**

**Michelle Spink – for [www.birthinangus.org.uk](http://www.birthinangus.org.uk)**

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2010 at 20:28, weighing 8lb 9.5oz, baby Ethan Alexander Robb was born, at Montrose Royal Infirmary. This is my birth story.

I really relied on the midwives for advice in the days leading up to the birth of my son. As well as my regular arranged visits, I telephoned the department several times for advice and reassurance. I was anxious about the impending delivery but more so about not really knowing when it would finally begin, and the midwives clearly understood that as they offered me just the advice that I needed at the right time.

I spent two days leading up to labour having contractions; about one every 10 or so minutes apart, but they were still irregular. I did not feel it necessary to attend the department, but did keep the midwives informed of my progress over the telephone.

I was 41 weeks pregnant when I eventually went into labour. I phoned the department at approximately 7.30am on the day of birth and told them that I was having contractions every ten minutes. I was told to have something to eat, get some energy and come up when I was ready. I stayed at home with my partner and let the contractions reach a more regular pattern. At approximately 1pm, as I was having one contraction every 8 minutes, I phoned the department again and arranged to come in. I asked for a VE [vaginal examination] and it was established that I was approximately 1cm dilated. It was recommended that I go for a walk or go home and try and relax and contact the department when my contractions were stronger and more regular.

On reflection this was very good advice. However, at the time I remember feeling quite despondent when I was informed that I was only 1cm dilated. I felt I was making good progress and now, armed with this information, I was beginning to feel I didn't know what was happening with my own body after all. The midwife explained why it was not always best to have a VE at this stage, due to the negative feelings associated with it. In hindsight it would have been better for me to just listen to my own body and avoid having this examination.

At approximately 2pm, as we travelled the short drive home from Montrose to Arbroath, I had one contraction, which was a lot stronger than the ones I had been experiencing all morning.

I arrived home and lay on the sofa and dozed on and off for an hour or so, waking every 6 minutes with a very painful contraction. At approximately 5pm I just knew I was ready to go back to the department. I phoned the department in tears and was told to come right in.

I arrived soon after and the midwives had started preparing the pool for my labour and the room was all set up for us. I was introduced to Fiona, the midwife on duty, and was told to relax as much as I could and feel free to walk around and make myself at home. I was immediately relieved.

At one stage I actually felt that my contractions had eased off and I was really worried that I was wasting everyone's time. I expressed this to Fiona and she was excellent, and really reassured me that this was not the case.

At around 7.30pm I had three very strong contractions and on the third my waters broke.

It was at this time that I entered the pool.

With my partner and Fiona by the edge of the pool, I stayed on my knees and began breathing through contractions. I was constantly reassured by both my partner and midwife on my good progress and it did motivate me. I felt an urge to push pretty much straight away on entering the pool and on every contraction I realised that I was actually refraining from pushing and it was heightening the pain. I was advised to push when I felt I needed to, and this really did take the edge off the pain. I seem to hate losing control and it was making me anxious. Fiona, the midwife, recognised this and talked me through relaxing and breathing.

I was then introduced to another midwife, Sandra, who was lovely and also helped put me at ease. It was not long afterwards that the urge to push was very strong, and at this point I did ask for gas and air. Shortly afterwards, at 8.28pm, my son entered the world.

Ethan was handed to me and that immediate feeling of relief and love was overwhelming. He looked very much like his big sister, Evie, who was born in the same pool only 20 months earlier. It was a very calm and relaxing environment and very emotional. My partner, Ethan's daddy, cut his cord and we were then offered the opportunity to sit together by ourselves to get to know our son (and enjoy our tea and toast).

The night that followed was lovely. The unit has a very relaxed atmosphere and I enjoyed every minute of being alone with my son during the night, and Sandra was there for any questions or even a chat, and it was just a special night.

As I mentioned, this was my second waterbirth within the 2 years at Montrose Royal Infirmary. I can honestly say that both of my experiences, from ante-natal care to birth and post natal care, were just so utterly amazing that I feel extremely blessed.

Labour is not without pain, however I can look back on both my children's births and feel proud of my achievement each time and am left with very positive memories.

My friends and family often remark on how well I cope with both babies, and how I seemed to just take it all in my stride, and I firmly believe that this is because of the positive care I received. I delivered both my children in the setting that I chose, and believe this has had a remarkable effect on my mental and physical well being.

**Michelle Spink**  
**Proud mummy to Evie and Ethan**