



Client Testimonial and Birth Story

This birth story gives me all the feels! Huge congratulations to Cat and Olly on this birth of their daughter Emily, who was born at home in water on the 27th January 2021

My pregnancy was pretty straight forward – sickness in the first trimester, feeling great in the second and then feeling heavy and lethargic in the third. I kept active throughout, keeping up with my 30 minutes/3 times a week work outs (although scaled down and never pushing myself), they made me feel healthy and strong throughout my pregnancy and I never suffered with any back problems, which I feel was down to this. I also started attending weekly yoga classes after my 12 week scan and kept this up right until the end and found this invaluable in the final weeks as it allowed me the time to relax, shut my mind off from my ever growing ‘to do list’ and I also found I slept better that night. I went swimming in between lock downs and it was the weightlessness and instant relaxation I felt in my body that I started looking into water births as this was the place that I felt the most calm and looked forward to my daily swims during my pregnancy. I was recommended by numerous people to take a Hypnobirthing course with Terri from Cornwall Hypnobirthing & Hypnotherapy as this will help with a positive, natural water birth. She provided me with the tools to feel confident to prepare for a home birth and it became something I looked forward to instead of feared.

My due date was 28th January and I was adamant I would be late. Having spoken to many friends who have had babies and reading pregnancy books, most tell of how first time babies always come late. I already had an appointment booked with my midwife for 5 days over my due date and had in my mind that I would probably go into labour the following week. However, on Wednesday 26th January as I sat down for dinner with my boyfriend, Olly, and his two children (Georgi 14, Eliza 10) at 6:30pm, I can’t remember what we were talking about but we all started laughing and that’s when I felt my waters break. I called my midwife Laura straight away and informed her that I wasn’t having any surges. She told me that she wasn’t on duty that evening, she reminded me of the number to call if anything did happen during the night, but if not, she would see me first thing in the morning to check that my waters had broken. I felt sure nothing would happen before then so I decided to get some rest and prepare for the big day in the morning. We had decided on a water birth at home, so my boyfriend decided to blow up the birth pool in the living room just to be safe. A few hours later at 8:30pm whilst watching TV, I started to feel dull like period pains that came every 8 minutes, then at 10pm as I was getting into bed they became more intense. I tried to settle into bed but my body just wanted me to be upright. I told my boyfriend to move to the living room and start making it cosy as I was sure we wouldn’t be getting much sleep that night. As we lit the candles and put on the calming music, I started timing my surges and they were coming every 6 minutes. I tried all sorts of different positions that I had learnt and read about during my pregnancy, the position that worked for me was being sat on the birthing ball, leaning over the sofa arm, whilst Olly sat on the sofa and held my hand. This forward, upright and open position was how I felt the most relaxed and allowed me to breathe and facilitate each surge to make it count.

It must also be said that Olly did a great job creating a peaceful atmosphere and I was so pleased to have him by my side.

The surges became more intense and I kept timing them, by 2am they were every 4-5 minutes so I called the on duty midwife Chloe. I had two surges whilst I was on the phone to her and she said it sounded like I was coping really well. I told her that I felt happy just making contact with her and that I would keep going until my surges came closer together. I managed to dose between surges and kept going with my calm breathing. By 6am they were closer together and more intense. I called Chloe and she arrived within minutes. She checked me and I was 5cm! I was so happy to hear that, which meant we could start filling up the pool. I couldn't wait to get in, by that point I just needed a change of scenery.

I hadn't moved from the birthing ball all night, Chloe asked me to try to go to the loo before I got into the pool. This idea filled me with dread. I felt safe on the ball, knowing I could handle my surges. The idea of moving was terrifying! However, she insisted, and with the help from Olly I made my way to the loo. I had a surge on the way, I wasn't calm at this point and found my breathing went out the window – I really struggled with this surge and just wanted to get back on the birthing ball where I knew I was safe. I had another surge on the loo and then again on the walk back from the bathroom – each time I wasn't relaxed or using the breathing techniques, each time I found the surges hard to deal with and this was when I had my wobble, telling Olly that I didn't think I could do this. When I eventually got back to the birthing ball I relaxed and tuned back into my breathing. I felt safe here, and the surges that followed I could deal with. I stayed here for another 40 minutes until the birthing pool was full and I was able to get in. Chloe suggested I have a tea spoon of honey when I got into the pool to keep my energy up as I didn't feel like eating and hadn't had anything all night except for sips of lucozade. This really helped me find another lease of energy. By this point I was also taking gas & air that Chloe had brought.

When I got in the pool, the next surge I had, I felt my body start to bare down. This was something I wasn't controlling, my body was automatically doing this. I told Chloe and she told me that I shouldn't be pushing just yet, as when she checked how far I was dilated, the baby was still moving into optimum position and this was probably the pressure I felt. She told me to try a different position to take the pressure off – at that time I was in a squat like position in the pool, so I turned around and knelt in the pool, resting against the sides whilst holding Olly's hand. The next surge I had, I felt the same pressure again of my body baring down, I tried to stop this but couldn't. I told Chloe that it was still happening so she said the next surge she would take a look. The following surge she was shocked to see a head and informed me that I would be having a baby very soon. I remember feeling relieved! Relieved that my body knew what it was doing, I remember having complete trust in my body and my baby at that time.

I'm not sure when the 2nd midwife Vicky arrived, but I remember her being there and feeling calm knowing they were both there and looking out for me. They were both smiley, friendly and relaxed. They created a great atmosphere for myself and Olly – we both felt completely safe and supported with them. I was also so happy to have Olly by my side throughout. He was so supportive and never left my side. He kept telling me what a good job I was doing and how he was proud of me, this helped with my positivity, particularly at times when I was having a little wobble.

It all seemed to happen so quickly but I remember one surge being so strong and long, I breathed with it and my baby came flying out! Olly was there to receive and pulled her out of the water declaring we had a girl at 8:30am! I remember being completely shocked and in awe of what had happened and how quickly it all happened! Olly's children who had been in bed sleeping all night, came down stairs 5 minutes later to be greeted with their half-sister. They were also shocked and in awe as they had no idea that this had been going on throughout the night. I had skin to skin cuddles with my daughter and once the cord had stopped pulsating, Olly cut the umbilical cord and he then had cuddles. Once she was weighed and wrapped up, Olly and the girls took her upstairs for more cuddles

whilst I stepped out of the birthing pool and delivered the placenta, which was stubborn but we persevered! I was checked over and told I had a tear so I had some stitches and then sent to have a nice hot shower. Once I was clean, I sat on the sofa with some tea & toast, my daughter was put into my arms and I was helped by the midwives on how to breast feed. As I sat there staring at my baby girl, Chloe & Vicky wrote up the notes and also shared in some tea & toast. It was actually the first time all night that I was able to have a good chat with them. It was lovely getting to know them and I will always be so thankful to them for assisting me in having the positive birth I wanted. In fact, it was better than I ever thought and I keep reliving the moment my beautiful baby came into this world.

Olly and I eventually settled on a name that evening – Emily. Baby Emily is so loved and we are so lucky to have had that incredible experience of when she was brought into this world.