

## **How Does Pregnancy Yoga Help? By a BoCo Member**

I gave birth on Thursday 10th Dec to my second child, Skyla Rose Davies :-) I attended about 5 or so yoga classes with Holly, mainly towards the end of my pregnancy. I suspected that the things I had learnt at yoga would help me cope better this time round and now that I am on the other side of the birth, I am pleased to say they definitely did.

I started with contractions at 2am, and the golden thread breath was absolutely amazing. It achieved everything that Holly said it would, and i felt so much more in control, and so much less panicked, than I had last time I laboured. From the outside, my mum was amazed by how calm I was, although to me, the key difference was that I was able to mentally focus. The meaning of golden thread imagery changed for me as my labour progressed, but I loved that Holly had encouraged us to interpret it freely (and to adapt moves etc according to our instinct), as I think this made it very effective.

When I arrived at Abbey Birth Centre at St Peters I was tearful but still outwardly calm and still felt in control. In triage they found that I was over 8cm dilated and so I went straight to a room, got on a beanbag and delivered in a sort of all-fours upright position, which I was very used to from yoga. Unfortunately there wasn't time to fill up the pool....

If you had told me that I could go through the (2nd) most painful/physically challenging experience of my life with a breathing exercise and visualisation making a massive difference, I would not have believed it. I also used the flower ( I chose a lotus) and the coffee plunger visualisations, again - fantastic, although they were more in the form of fleeting images as there was so much going on. My only other pain relief was and air in the second stage. Following the birth, I am doing well.

I also did Pilates, maternally fit aerobics, and natal hypnotherapy CDs. All of these things helped in different ways, but I would not have been without the yoga, particularly for late pregnancy and the birth. in the evenings leading up to the birth, I was able to remember most of the moves we did (in this, the relative simplicity of the classes helped compared to other more complex yoga classes) and i did lots of them before bed, which really helped with sleeping which could be difficult, - neck and shoulder relaxation was particularly good for this. Finally, I again used golden thread when the 'after pains' came (new for a second time mum). Please pass on my deep gratitude to Holly.

Bonnie Groves