



towels and warm water. I bent double in pain and somehow did a forward roll across the living room floor, landing pressed up against my son's toy box! As I tipped over, my husband said calmly, "stay still!" and proceeded to 'catch' our tiny new daughter as she arrived into the world (all his years of playing Rugby paid off!) It was 7:50pm. No time for ambulances or midwives, Alexandra decided she needed to arrive into the world and would wait for no one.

Thankfully, both of us were perfectly fine and with huge support from family we managed to move into our lovely new home 3 days later. The week that followed was the most relaxing week I had experienced in months. Somehow dealing with a new baby and toddler, amidst boxes and wet paint was nothing compared to such an eventful delivery!



A day in the life of ...

a Chocolatier

If you haven't already discovered the delights of Amelia Rope's sublime chocolate, I have one question for you... where have you been?

The flavours she comes up with are divine with the lime and sea salt my personal favourite!

Here, she tells us about what it's like to walk a day in the shoes of a chocolatier...

I USUALLY GET UP AROUND 6.30am and then after making a cup of coffee head straight to my laptop to catch up on any overnight emails. My brain is always alert for writing first thing so any long emails or PR pieces will usually be done then.

I check my bank and debits/credits. Any business needs to keep a tight eye on cashflow. Outstanding invoices can kill a business. Any retailers who are small

and not regular customers pay on a proforma basis and any one offered credit terms who does not pay on time gets relegated back to proforma!

I do all my online orders and so will get these organised first thing.

I usually go to the gym for an hour - it can be 7.30am/8.30am or later. I fit it around my workload priority. I go to keep fit but also for switch off and relaxation too.

Most days I will have meetings out, I go to my production unit once a week to collect stock, check on production and see if there are any issues. During the busy seasonal times (Valentine's, Mother's Day, Easter and Christmas) I go into my major retailers (Fortnum & Mason, Liberty, Selfridges, Wholefoods) every 4-6 weeks to do instore tastings. As I don't have an assistant at this stage I have a lot to catch up on after the 3 hour tastings! I love them though as I am a people person and to see new and old

customers enjoy your brand is the hugest of compliments.

Days can include conjuring up new recipes in my kitchen at home, photo shoots, accounting, new product development, writing business plans, holding possible investment meetings, attending UKTi export seminars, Academy of Chocolate committee meetings, export sales (there is a large amount of admin involved in these), PR, sales, marketing, dealing with enquiries, sending out samples, in store tastings, keeping up with new labelling laws, food laws and new projects (one of which I am working on now and is so exciting!).

I am a multitasker which I hope will change soon when I take on an assistant.

I usually eat on the move or grab chocolate for lunch.

I usually stop around 7pm but sometimes I will work through until 9pm or later. Having just returned from a trip

to Colombia I am up later as their day begins 5 hours after ours and skype calls need to be held.

If I am in, I aim to eat a light supper and usually eat around 7.30pm.

Sleep - well that happens as and when. www.ameliarope.com

