

PRESS RELEASE

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Amelia Lavery was in a hurry to arrive. In fact, so much of a hurry she almost arrived too early.

On 30 January 1980, Amelia entered the world 14 weeks premature at 850 grams and only 34 centimetres long on what her mother Jan calls the “absolute edge of viability”.

Technology had advanced just far enough to ensure her survival. But only just.

“I guess you could say we were extremely lucky,” says Jan, who was 38 at the time and had had several miscarriages.

As for Amelia, now 18, she tried for most of her life to play down just how lucky she was.

“My parents always mentioned it and talked about it but it made me uncomfortable and I tried to ignore it,” she says. “I didn’t want to be different.

“I didn’t know anyone else that was so premature and I didn’t appreciate the technology or how sick I was at the time and how close I came to not surviving.”

Amelia spent her first four weeks of life in hospital on a respirator and after a short stint at home was back again.

Despite suffering some developmental problems as a child, such as poor vision, Amelia has grown into what Jan calls a “tall and elegant” young woman.

After excellent results in late secondary school, she now studies ballet but is undecided whether she will continue with that as a career or move to another form of human movement, or even physiotherapy for dancers.

She has a favourite picture of herself as a prem, which also shows her father Peter’s hand. She laughs when she sees she was not much bigger

