

My new baby brought me happiness



enjoyed at pregnant again

Corrie's Kym Marsh is pregnant, nearly two years after losing her premature baby Archie. Carole Crayford, 37, from Kent has been through the same roller-coaster of emotions

Putting my arms around my son Michael, I pointed towards the sky. 'Do you know who's up there?' I whispered. He nodded. 'Sandra,' replied. 'She's in heaven.' Michael, seven, knows all about his sister. She is very much part of our lives – even though he and Sandra never met her. Sandra was my first child and she was stillborn. Now it's hard to talk about her. I let myself think about her much I would cry all day. I had a nursery childminder it was natural I would want to have children of my own. My son David, 38, was just as excited to be a dad and we started talking immediately after getting married in August 2001.

Months later I discovered I was pregnant – and we found out at my 16-week scan it was a girl. My pregnancy was very easy. In the last few weeks we went to prenatal classes to prepare for the birth and I painted the cot pink. One evening, in September, I was cooking dinner when I had contractions. 'It's time!' I called to David. He rushed me to hospital, five minutes' drive

away, but they told me I wasn't far enough on. I was sent home for a few hours to have a bath until I was further dilated. But the pain got more intense and we went back again. This time I was wheeled into a delivery room.

I was in labour all night and the next day. I was determined the birth was going to be as natural as possible so I just had gas and air. It was getting close to midnight when I gave one big push and my little girl came into the world. I held my breath, expecting to hear a baby's cry, but there was just a terrible silence.

Instead of being handed my daughter, the midwife bundled her up and whisked her over to a heater.

She hit a panic button and within seconds there were eight doctors in the room. My baby was rushed away

without any explanation – there was obviously something very wrong. David and I clung to one another, terrified, as the midwife tried to find out what was happening.

Finally, about 20 minutes later, she came back with our daughter in her arms. There was still silence. That silence, along with her face, said it all. 'You can hold her,' she whispered, placing the small, lifeless body in my arms. I nodded, tears rolling down my cheeks. I cradled my dead daughter with David by my side.

We hadn't agreed on a name but as I held her, I decided to call her Sandra, after my mother. It was only then that we found out she had been stillborn, that she had never even taken one breath. Finally, I allowed the midwife to take

her away to the mortuary. In hospital, all I could hear were newborn babies crying. Unable to sleep, I checked myself out.

When I got home, everything was a daze. I had been expecting to return with a baby but there was just a feeling of emptiness. David got some friends to dismantle the nursery, so I wasn't forced to look at Sandra's empty cot.

Her funeral was the hardest day of my life. David and I were crying as we scattered Sandra's ashes near the baby glade at the crematorium. And the first few weeks afterwards were incredibly difficult – I couldn't bear to be around children.

Then we got the results of Sandra's post-mortem. There was nothing anybody could have done. With this news, we started trying for another baby immediately, and the week before Christmas I found out I was pregnant again. I was delighted but then I got so scared something was going to go wrong. I hated every minute of my pregnancy, forever worrying about what could happen.

The hospital gave me checks and scans all the way through,

and on 18 August 2003 Michael was born by Caesarean. It was such a relief when I heard his cries.

The first few weeks were very emotional. I kept thinking of Sandra and even told myself not to get too attached to Michael in case he was taken away from me. I even bought a monitor to detect his heartbeat when he was sleeping.

David was so supportive, and it took a few months, but finally I started to enjoy being a mum.

Michael grew into a playful little boy. We told him about Sandra when he was young as we thought it was important that he knew. Soon he started talking about her.

Then, in 2005, I fell pregnant again with twin girls. I was excited, but doubly scared. I never really relaxed, especially when Rebecca and Hannah were born six weeks early in November 2005. Hannah had to spend a day in the special care baby unit, but she was fine.

We've also told our girls about their sister and have given them



REAL LIFE

Carole today, with kids Rebecca, Michael and Hannah



With baby Michael

'SUCH A RELIEF'

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