

## THE BABY THAT BROUGHT THEM BACK TOGETHER

# MY RELATIONSHIP, MY BEAUTIFUL BABY BOY, EVERYTHING IS GOOD. I'M BLESSED'

**MUM CLAIRE SWEENEY TELLS OK!'S CHRISSIE EVES ABOUT HER SON'S ARRIVAL, FIRST-TIME MOTHERHOOD AT 43 AND WHY SHE'S THRILLED TO BACK WITH JAXON'S FATHER, DANIEL REILLY**

When Claire Sweeney greets us at the door of her beautiful warehouse-style Liverpool Docks, first-time mum smiling as she looks at her 7lb 6oz baby boy in her arms, it's clear Claire, 43, has never felt like a duck ever since Jaxon was delivered by Caesarean in the Catherine Wheel Women's Hospital at 11.30pm on September 18th. Barely looked back to the new mum, Claire overcomes with a smile and tells us: 'He was amazing, and when I held him – we were like banshees! My instinct was on the lips and as I held him, I felt silent, looked into his eyes and it was the most beautiful moment. It was a raw emotion I knew I was his mum. Thinking about it, I look at him I feel like I'm getting ripped apart by how much love I have for him. It's totally different to anything I've felt before.' Claire was on a huge high at the start of 2014 when she broke off her relationship with the father of her son, Daniel Reilly, 29, back in 2011. She found out – just a few days later – that she was pregnant with her child.

Both busy with their own lives, they just grew apart and didn't take time out

course,' Claire told us back in June. 'There was no big scandal and no other women involved and then wham bam I find out I'm pregnant!'

It was bittersweet for former *Brookside* actress and TV personality Claire, because after years of trying for children and two devastating miscarriages, her dreams of motherhood were about to become a reality. After breaking the news to businessman Daniel – who proposed on Christmas Eve last year – following her three-month scan, despite their separation, he vowed to support both her and the baby. However, now, six months on, Claire reveals how their 7lb 6oz son has brought her and Daniel back together and they're now closer than ever.

Here, Claire talks all about her incredible journey to motherhood, reuniting with Daniel and her new family of three...

### **Congratulations on baby Jaxon's arrival! Tell us about the birth...**

Daniel took me to hospital at 11am on the Monday, I went into the operating theatre at 1pm and he stayed by my side through it all. After I'd had the spinal injections done, Jaxon was born at 1.58pm and I was out of theatre by 2.30pm, but I stayed in hospital until the Friday where I had so much amazing care. I had the best obstetrician to deliver him called Devender Roberts. I've got the tiniest scar.

### **Why did you have a C-section?**

Towards the end of my pregnancy I had a real desire for a natural birth, but I was advised to have a Caesarean because he was breech.

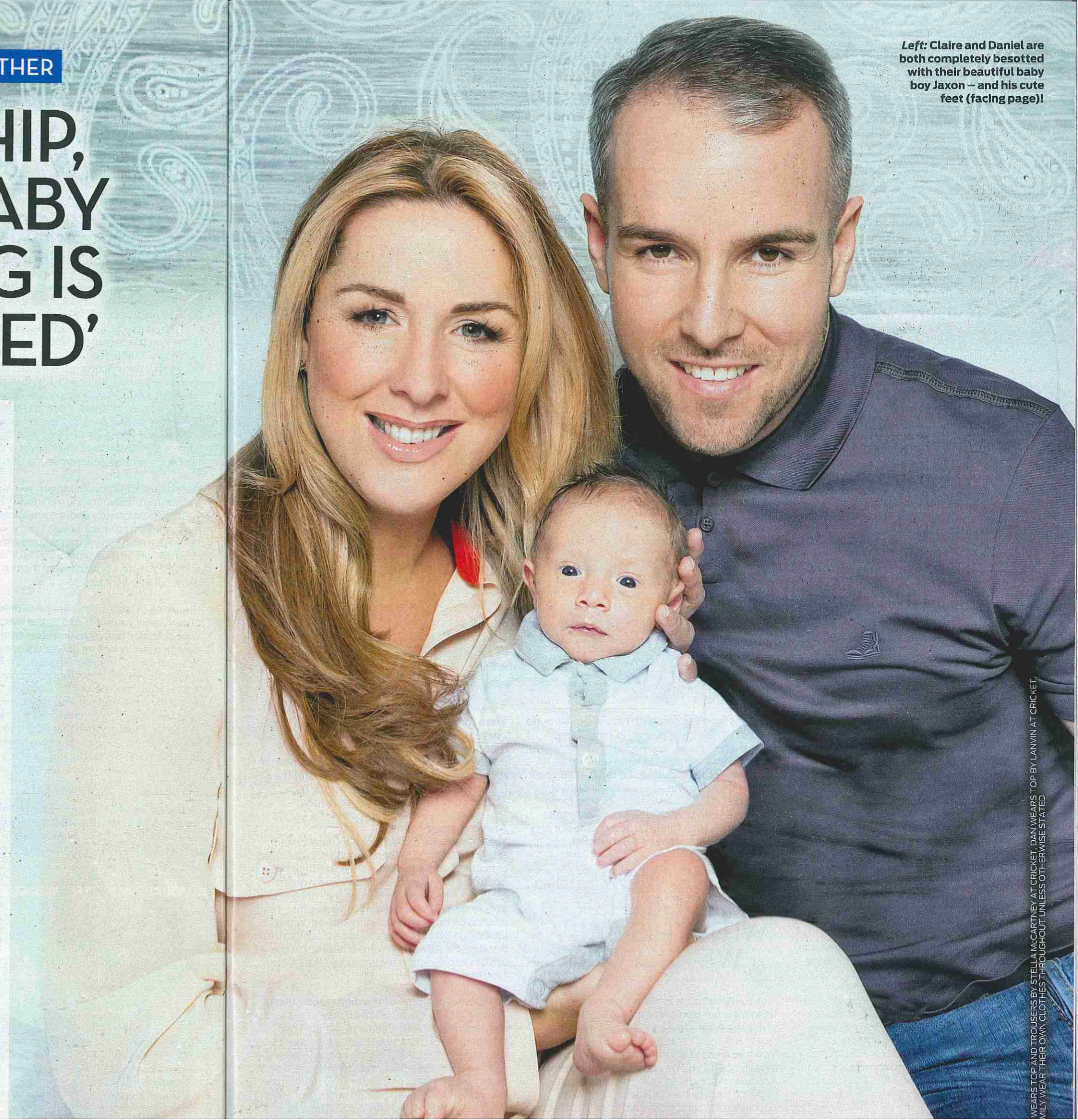
### **What is your first memory of Jaxon?**

He came out screaming and when I saw him I started – we were like screaming banshees! My instinct was to kiss him on the lips and as I did, we both fell silent, looked into each other's eyes and it was the most beautiful moment. It was the most natural raw emotion I've ever felt; he knew I was his mum – I cry thinking about it.

### **What was Daniel doing during your Caesarean?**

He was just watching. We thought about filming it all, but I wanted him to see it with his naked eye and take it all in and enjoy it. He took the most amazing photo when Jaxon was lifted out. Then he

Left: Claire and Daniel are both completely besotted with their beautiful baby boy Jaxon – and his cute feet (facing page)!



...facing page: 'We're  
together with this baby  
we've become a unit,'  
us about rekindling  
relationship with Daniel



I find that?

ine. He was more worried about  
nce the operation started. I was  
he was brilliant and calmed me  
breathing exercises with me. My  
s the spinal injection not kicking  
luckily it did.

le you and Daniel closer?

together all the time now. The  
by and Daniel is here with me  
and he's fantastic. Daniel has  
me and looking after me. He's

g in your room and you're

me. He's amazing and he couldn't  
portive or a better dad. Having  
us so much closer and suddenly  
m. We're working together  
d it's like we've become a unit,  
iel is so hands on - he's really  
's changed everything. Daniel  
e over my bump, that was  
n. I finally feel like everything is  
my relationship, my beautiful  
ing is good, I feel so blessed. I  
lts back from his heel-prick test  
ay.

We just sat on the sofa with him, walked around  
and got him accustomed to his new home.

**You said you were going to have Barbra  
Streisand playing during the birth - did you?**

No, but the radio was on - I was cut open to  
*Shout* by Tears For Fears, and when he came  
out Annie Lennox was belting out *There Must  
Be An Angel*. Then this little body came out and  
this beautiful little face and the longest legs. It

**'WE'RE WORKING  
TOGETHER  
WITH THIS BABY -  
WE'RE A UNIT'**

was funny because Jennifer Ellison was in the  
hospital room next room to me! She's been  
giving me great advice as it's her third child.

**You had a scare during pregnancy with some  
bleeding. Did you have any other incidents?**

That was when my placenta moved up, but  
it moved back to the right place. I was very  
uncomfortable and emotional in the days before

**Were there any other dramas?**

I suffered from symphysis pubis dysfunction a  
month before he arrived. It meant I had terrible  
pains walking when my pelvis was opening and  
my hips were getting wider to prepare for the  
baby. I wore a hoist belt for support and had  
acupuncture by Zita West which helped.

**Are you breast-feeding?**

Yes, my midwife Rachel and her team looked  
after me 24/7 and helped me with it. I was more  
concerned about the breast-feeding than I was  
about the Caesarean, because I was worried  
that I wouldn't produce enough milk or be  
able to do it. By day three it got so painful - he  
latched on but it was like someone sticking a  
Louboutin heel in my nipple, but I stuck with it  
because the advantages are amazing. I'm going  
to start expressing in two weeks so I can bottle  
feed him.

**Will Daniel do some of the night feeds then?**

That's the plan, because I'm up three times a  
night feeding for half an hour and then it can  
take another 20 minutes to settle him down.  
One night he'll be up all night and the following  
night he'll be better, but I'm still getting up every  
three hours to feed. I'm desperately reading the  
books to get him sleep trained but he's not even

dark! It's tough only getting three hours a night  
because I love my sleep, but I've had 43 years  
of sleep so I've got to enjoy it. After a screaming  
night, the next morning I look into his eyes and  
my heart melts and all is forgiven.

**So Daniel is very hands on, then?**

Yes, he's been brilliant. He took him off me for  
a few hours this morning so I could sleep for  
a while. Daniel just took to nappy changing  
straight away and he's always there supporting  
me. I couldn't wish for anyone better.

**Did he come to the final scans with you?**

Yes, all of them. Then when Jaxon was born, he  
had skin-on-skin contact with him straight after  
he was delivered, that's really important. Jaxon  
loves to sleep on Daniel's chest, he knows his  
mummy and daddy now.

**Did he get emotional when he met the baby?**

Oh my God, he's totally in love with his boy. I've  
never seen this side of him because we've had no  
kids and he's seen a new side of me as a mum.

**Did you suffer any baby blues?**

On day three I was very tearful but that was  
down to having six hours sleep in three days,  
and I was in pain from the operation. My  
hormones crashed, but if you breast-feed it  
releases another hormone, which makes you  
feel better and balances you out.

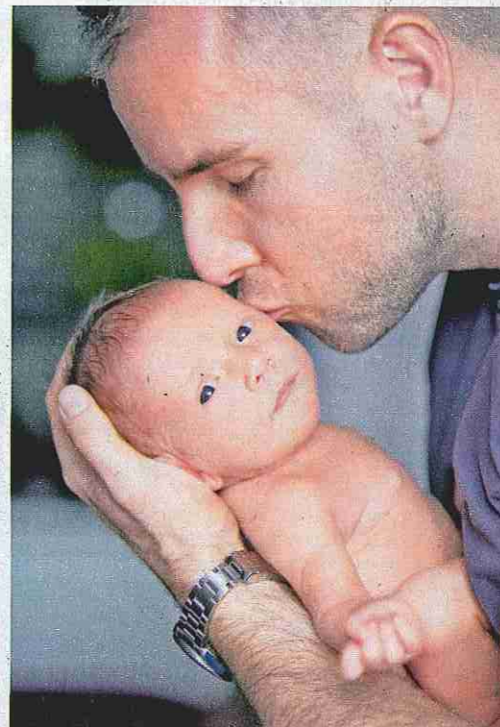
**Are you still in pain?**

Not really, they gave me lots of painkillers after  
the operation but I've just got to be careful  
while I'm healing, especially when I'm picking  
things up. I can't just go back to normal or drive  
for a good four weeks. But I've spent years on  
the go so I've got to enjoy this time off to bond

with the baby because it'll soon be time to get  
back to work.

**When are you going back to work?**

I'm doing panto at Christmas at the Liverpool  
Empire. After nine weeks off, I think I'll be ready  
to go back to work by then. I'll have to see  
how the little fella is, but if I can get him sleep  
trained and into a routine then I'll be fine. And  
I start rehearsals in February for my show *Sex  
In Suburbia* which I wrote, which goes on tour  
in March.



**What will you do about childcare?**

Daniel will do the evenings and there's a fabulous  
midwife who said she'll sit with the baby in the  
afternoons in the dressing room, but I'm lucky  
because it's only two hours while I'm on stage  
and I'll take him with me to rehearsals. I've got a  
great support network of people in Liverpool.

**Where did the name come from?**

Jaxon was a name that Daniel and I chose  
together when I was pregnant the year before  
when I had the two miscarriages. I liked that it  
was a name we both agreed on. Then I went  
to Australia, heard it a lot over there and fell  
in love with it all over again. I love that we've  
double-barrelled it - Jaxon-Reilly Sweeney  
sounds like a movie star or a president!

**You also liked the name Gabriel - was Daniel  
not keen?**

Not really, but I just kept changing my mind -  
one minute I wanted Harrison, then Gabriel,  
which was popular with a lot of my gay friends  
and female friends, but my male friends weren't  
keen! As a joke, I wound a friend up and said I  
was going to call him Walton, because that's  
where I'm from in Liverpool, and he believed me.  
He then announced it on Twitter so everyone  
picked up on it - but it was nothing to do with  
Holly Willoughby's baby name of Chester.

**You said the baby would be perfect with  
Daniel's looks and your personality - is he  
showing signs of either?**

He's the absolute image of Daniel. I saw a  
picture of him as a baby and it looks like the  
same baby.

**Is he showing any signs of being a  
showbiz baby?!**

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my little fantasy world, he came out with his legs in the air right above his shoulders; he looked like he was doing the most marvellous high kicks, so I was like: 'Yay!'

**You initially wanted a girl, has Jaxon made you want to try for another?**

Oh, I haven't even thought about it, I'm still in this bubble of feeding, not sleeping and looking after Jaxon, so it's not a priority at the moment. It's all about him right now. He is my everything and he's enough.

**Are you going to get a nanny or night nurse to help out?**

Yes, I'm going to get a maternity night nurse to help him get into a routine.

**Do you feel proud when you're walking down the street with Jaxon?**

I haven't been out yet because I've had major surgery and I've only been out of hospital a week. Daniel took me out for lunch yesterday but I'm healing before going out with the pram.

**Have you had lots of nice messages and gifts?**

I've been spoilt by people sending me gifts and flowers and I've had so many messages on Twitter, people have been so kind and

supportive. Our parents have been a fantastic support too. Our two mums get on great and they were waiting for me to come out of the operating theatre with my dad. I came out and was high as a kite from all the drugs!

**What's been the biggest change since Jaxon came along?**

The feeling of selflessness and a need to protect this little precious being. It's not about me any more, it's all about looking after him and making him healthy and strong. I'm 43 and I've always done what I wanted to do without answering to anyone, and suddenly it's all about him.

Claire hasn't toasted Jaxon's arrival yet, and says: 'I wouldn't care if I never touched another drop, I haven't missed it!'



...e always done what I  
...o do without answering  
...e, and suddenly it's all  
...n,' Claire reveals. Below:  
...ain home is in London,  
...ouse in Liverpool is 'just  
...or the baby'



#### ...be a christening?

...ve not even thought about it yet, I'm just  
...et through the night and feeding him.

#### ...had your first alcoholic drink yet?

...ldn't care if I never touched another  
...ven't missed it. I had the odd glass  
...as pregnant but I didn't particularly  
...m so aware of what I'm putting into my  
...ause it comes through into my breast  
...t want everything nice and clean and  
...him.

#### ...you feel about your post-baby body?

...aking at my figure now and getting a  
...d thinking, is this it? When you have the  
...u have an excuse! I was ten and a half  
...fore I fell pregnant and now I'm 13 stone  
...in so I was like, oh my God! I have two  
...f stone to lose, but I'm still swollen after  
...ation; it takes a few weeks to settle down,  
...then can you get a true picture. I did

exercise when I was pregnant with Results With  
Bump, which helped. As long as Jaxon is healthy  
and I'm eating good nutrition and looking after  
myself, that's the important thing.

## 'I COULDN'T WISH FOR ANYONE BETTER WITH DANIEL'

#### Have you felt like you need more food while you've been breast-feeding?

Daniel is on paternity leave for two weeks so  
we've been sat watching *The Sopranos* all day!  
He said to me: 'Do you want a Magnum ice  
cream?' which is one of my favourite things in  
the world, and I was like: 'Oh  
go on then!' I've really got to  
knock all that on the head!

#### What's your diet like?

I'm having lots of bran  
and flaxseed to keep me  
regular. Dan makes a lovely  
scrambled egg on toast  
with tomatoes for lunch and  
dinner is something like a  
piece of salmon with spinach  
and sweet potato.

#### Did you have any cravings while you were pregnant with Jaxon?

I thought the cravings came  
at the start of pregnancy,  
but I couldn't get enough of  
avocados towards the end.

#### What was the biggest

The transition from going from a size 12 to a 14  
and wearing maternity clothes. I went to Ascot,  
and I thought I had a choice of several outfits  
in my wardrobe, and suddenly I had to buy a  
maternity dress; nothing fitted and my shape  
changed so much from being a bit heavier to  
having a big bump at five months. People think  
I'm lying when I say I loved being pregnant,  
though. You hear about women who are sick all  
the way through and my heart goes out to them –  
I was blessed.

#### Tell us about Jaxon's nursery – what's it like?

It's not really a nursery, I've got a cot and a  
Moses basket in our bedroom and there's a little  
room upstairs for him, but my main home is in  
London so I'm between the two. I don't know  
where he'll be when I go back down to London  
in February.

#### How long have you lived in this house...

I bought it during my *Brookside* days about 17  
years ago. I did it up about two years ago and  
it's just perfect now for the baby. I've got one  
bedroom upstairs that I don't really use and one  
bedroom downstairs – every other room is on  
that floor too, whereas my house in London is  
on four floors.

#### Your dad has been ill – how is he doing now?

He's had the all-clear from his lung cancer. He  
has one leg and they were worried they'd have  
to remove the other because of his diabetes, but  
it's okay now. It's his birthday in two weeks so he  
got a lovely birthday present in Jaxon! **OK!**

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