

FABULOUS FEMALES

Kimberley Walsh is describing the all-too-familiar daily chaos of the bath-time routine, when both of her boys get a final burst of energy and anarchy breaks out.

"It almost feels like they're taunting me and running in opposite directions. By the time I've got them to bed, I don't even know what I look like any more," she says.

"They are absolute nutters, my two. I thought they'd be quite placid like me, but they've both turned out full of character and so cheeky."

Having said that, she reckons she could just about handle another one to join Bobby, who turns four in September, and Cole, 19 months. However, her husband Justin Scott, 35, formerly of boy band Triple 8 and now a successful property developer, might take some persuading.

"I think I've got one more in me," says Kimberley. "I'm one of four so I think that's why I'm like: 'We can just keep going!' I didn't find pregnancy difficult, and I think if you've had a good experience then that makes the decision a bit easier."

"I think once this phase passes, Justin will be like: 'Ah, OK then.' It might feel more doable to him. It's just that they're so full-on at the moment."

She tells of a recent particularly stressful play date over at Giovanna Fletcher's house.

"I didn't know her that well, but we have two boys each and they are similar ages, so she was like: 'Come over! It'll be great!'"

Kimberley raises a weary eyebrow.

"Previous to this Bobby had been an angel child, but he was so naughty, challenging everything I said, and I just didn't know how to parent in that situation. Giovanna was all: 'Ah, it's fine, we've all been there.' Urgh. She sort of invited me back, but it hasn't happened yet..."

Mum mates have proven a lifeline for Kimberley. Just three months after Cole was born, her best friend Cheryl gave birth to baby Bear, her first child with Liam Payne, and now their two toddlers often play together. In the past, Kimberley, 36, has been cagey about her former Girls Aloud band mate in interviews. So it's perhaps indicative of Cheryl, 35, being much more settled in her personal life that Kimberley is happy to discuss their relationship today.

"She brought Bear over the other day and they're at the same stage, both walking everywhere, so we were in that zone where you have to entertain them literally all day long. The boys were very cute together."

"Cheryl's in a really good place and we're just helping each other through. We mother quite similarly, which I think was always likely because we're such close friends. She's got so many nieces and nephews, so it's like she's always done this and she's doing really well."

"Bear is such a happy, smiley and content child, so she must be doing something right. Cole is quite clingy - I couldn't leave him with Cheryl to go to the loo - whereas Bear will just chill with me until she comes back. He's more like my Bobby."

Cheryl is currently preparing a comeback after a long spell out of the public eye, promising new music later this year, which Kimberley reveals has been written with ex-Girls Aloud member Nicola Roberts.

"I can't give anything away, but she played me some the other day and it's quite exciting. Those two always worked well together. They were always more into the



THE BETH NEIL INTERVIEW

writing than the rest of us, and I think they bring out the best in each other."

She adds: "The way Cheryl likes to be is: when it's family time, it's family, and when it's work time, it's work, and there's nothing wrong with that. Juggling work and being a mum, she'll find her way just like we all do. It's just the way it is."

From the very start of Girls Aloud, back in 2002, Kimberley was closest to Cheryl and Nicola, which often gave rise to rumours of divisions within the band. In an interview with *Fabulous* earlier this year, Nadine Coyle denied there was ever a feud and likened it to any other work situation - some colleagues become friends, while others... well, don't.

Kimberley nods when this is put to her.

"I think that's a good way of describing it. Obviously we had to work with each other every single day, so on some level we got on. The superficial friendship was there, just maybe not so deep. But she's right, there weren't any clashes and we all knew what we had to do."

"And you do sort of lose connection as time goes on, but a lot has happened and I would love to see Nadine and get all the kids together [Nadine has a four-year-old daughter, Anaiya]. I feel like that would help us to find a new level together because we have that in common now. I'm sure it'll happen at some point - you run into people eventually!"

And Sarah Harding?

"I can't remember the last time I saw Sarah, but she's messaged me a few times recently, and it was nice to chat to her. She's doing all right, so I was glad about that. Sarah has literally not changed and I know if I saw her it would be like no time had passed."

Party-loving Sarah was always known as the rock-'n'-roll member of the band, but Kimberley says she wasn't the only one to enjoy a drink or five.

"I wasn't wild. I've never gone through a phase of drugs. But I do have another side, and I did go out a lot in my 20s. People used to say: 'I love drunk Kimberley - she's different!' It's not like I was uptight and didn't know how to enjoy myself."

"Drunk Kimberley doesn't come out that much these days because I just can't face the feeling the next day with the kids. I reach a tipping point, and where I used to think: 'Get me more, get me more!' now I'm like: 'Is it worth it?' And no, it's not."

"Maybe Justin and I will go through a midlife crisis when we're 50 - like, go topless on a yacht somewhere and everyone will go: 'Oh, it took her a while but she's finally lost it!'"

Since Girls Aloud called it a day five years ago, Kimberley has gone forth and diversified.

With a spell in the West End here, a spot of presenting there, a solo album, a starring role in ➔



'ANOTHER BABY? I THINK I'VE GOT ONE MORE IN ME...'

Her husband might take a bit of arm-twisting, but **KIMBERLEY WALSH** is already planning baby number three

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR FABULOUS
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