

SPRING

Supporting parents and relatives through baby loss



NEWSLETTER

No. 25
Winter 2016/17

The Snowdrop Walk

How we remembered our babies this spring.

Inside this issue:

- SPRING's Wave of Light and Christmas Events
- Real Stories
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- What's On



About SPRING

SPRING is here to help parents and families through the worst possible time in their lives. We support parents and families through the loss of a baby – at any stage of pregnancy, at or just after birth – whatever the circumstances and however long ago.

Established in 1998, SPRING is a parent-led charity that brings parents and medical professionals together to ensure bereaved parents and families are treated with sensitivity and genuine care. Our support is available to bereaved parents and families living in Poole, Bournemouth and surrounding areas.

We know we can't make everything better when a baby dies, but we aim to make sure things aren't worse for bereaved parents.

How we can help

The loss of a baby can feel overwhelming. We offer a range of services and support to help bereaved parents and families along this devastating journey. Not everyone will need or want to make use of everything we offer. But it is here if you need it, now or in the future.

Emotional and practical support, at the point of loss and beyond

Bereavement support

We work closely with the Maternity Bereavement Support Service at St Mary's Maternity Hospital and the Early Pregnancy Unit at Poole General Hospital.

Specialist bereavement support midwives and nurses offer information, advice and signposting to help parents and families make informed choices, and will continue to offer support at home, if required.

Professional counselling

Counselling is available for all bereaved parents and relatives following the loss of a baby. SPRING and Poole Hospital counselling services provide sessions with fully qualified counsellors who adhere to British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy guidelines (BACP).

Counselling for individuals or couples provides a safe, non-judgemental environment. Referrals are via medical professionals or parents can self-refer.

0-18 weeks' gestation including pre-conceptual concerns: 01202 448432.

Over 18 weeks' gestation, shortly after birth and birth trauma: 01202 448752.

Monthly open support meetings

SPRING runs monthly open support meetings for informal peer support.

They are facilitated by fully qualified counsellors and health professionals.

The meetings are friendly and relaxed and open to anyone who has experienced the death of a baby, either in pregnancy, at, or shortly after birth.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month 7.30 – 9.00pm

Rainbow pregnancies

We are also here to support parents and families through subsequent 'rainbow' pregnancies.

SPRING places

Bereavement suites

The SPRING Moon and Star bereavement suites at St Mary's Maternity Unit, Poole, provide space for parents and families to spend precious time with their baby before saying goodbye. Safe and private, these very special places mean parents and families receive specialised support as they go through the loss of their baby – away from the main maternity wards.

SPRING events

Remembrance events

Throughout the year, SPRING organises events to remember our precious babies.

February - *Snowdrop Walk*

October - *Wave of Light event (as part of Baby Loss Awareness Week)*

December - *Christmas Service*

Monthly coffee mornings

SPRING coffee mornings take place every month in a café, providing an informal and relaxed environment for bereaved parents and relatives to meet and share their experiences.

Other events

SPRING organises other social and fundraising events during the year – see our website for details www.springsupport.org.uk.

All bereaved parents and families are welcome to attend SPRING events. We look forward to meeting you.

Contact SPRING

24 hour answerphone: **01202 448084**

www.springsupport.org.uk

c/o St Mary's Maternity Unit, St Mary's Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 2JB

Poole Hospital Charity Registered No. 1058808.

Please note that any views or opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors, not those of SPRING. SPRING would encourage those seeking further advice and support to contact medical or counselling practitioners.



Chairperson's Chat

by Emma Johnston, SPRING Chairperson

Welcome to this edition of the SPRING newsletter.

Since the last issue, SPRING has hosted our three annual baby remembrance events: the Wave of Light event in October, the Christmas event in November and the Snowdrop Walk at the beginning of February. These occasions are always incredibly special as bereaved parents, families and friends remember their own precious babies, while standing shoulder to shoulder with others who have had similar experiences. I've always felt these events offer comfort, support and solidarity, which is they are such an important part of what SPRING is all about.

This edition of the newsletter also includes a write-up of our most recent Rainbow Families event – another important aspect of SPRING. We know that people who come along enjoy the opportunity to meet up with other bereaved parents with children – born after or before losses – so we will be organising more rainbow events this year. Watch this space!

SPRING events rely on the time and energy of volunteers, most of whom are bereaved parents. We are always grateful for any help people can offer – whether it's baking a cake, driving equipment to venues or helping out on the day. Please do get in touch if you'd like to get involved.

We are also very lucky to have a new Fundraising / Administration Assistant working with us. Sara Fripp joined us at the beginning of this year, bringing lots of energy and experience to help SPRING and the bereaved families we support. I'm sure she will do a great job.

Of course, everything SPRING does depends on the amazing efforts of everyone who fundraises for SPRING. This edition of the newsletter features some examples – but if you've been fundraising and would like to tell others about it, we'd love to hear from you.

Thanks also to the people who have shared their stories in this newsletter. I know it can be hard to write about such personal experiences, but it really does help other bereaved families, so thank you so much. If you would like to share your story, please do let us know.

Finally, this edition features details of upcoming SPRING events and activities – there's lots going on! Hopefully we will see you at a SPRING event soon.

Best wishes,

Emma x

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Hello from our new Fundraising / Administration Assistant



SPRING welcomes Sara Fripp as our new Fundraising/Administration Assistant. Sara says:

"I am really excited to be joining the SPRING team. My career started in the business sector before coming to join Poole Maternity in 2005. In this time I've worked as a Maternity Support Worker on the Haven Birthing Suite and most recently for the Eden Homebirth team. Alongside this role I've been a Learning Representative for the Royal College of Midwives which has given me lots of skills in events management, managing a learning fund and organising activities with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of staff.

"The outstanding support provided by SPRING is so highly valued. I feel privileged to be given the opportunity to work alongside the Core Committee and all the professionals involved with supporting bereaved parents."

If you would like to get involved in any of our upcoming events, or if you are planning your own fundraising activity, feel free to get in touch. Sara can be contacted on 01202 448084 or by email: sara.fripp@poole.nhs.uk

Best wishes,

Sara x

SPRING's Rainbow Family Event



SPRING's Rainbow Family event took place on Sunday 25 September at The Coffee House in Canford Heath. It was a lovely afternoon where families with children born before and after losses met up in an informal environment.

A large table became 'craft central' with children (and grown-ups!) taking part in activities – including the creation of a huge rainbow picture, featuring prints of the rainbow children there that day. There was also face-painting and home-made play doh, and some smaller toys for little ones to play with. And, of course – in true SPRING style – there was cake and refreshments! Huge thanks to everyone who came along and all the volunteers who helped to make it happen.

SPRING's rainbow family meet-ups are an important part of SPRING, and we hope to run more, similar events in future. Look out for updates on our Facebook page and the website. To find out more – or to share ideas for future rainbow events – please email friends@springsupport.org.uk



SPRING's Wave of Light Event

Bereaved parents, families and friends came together in Poole Park on Saturday 15 October for SPRING's annual Wave of Light event, which marked the end of Baby Loss Awareness Week.

It's always a beautiful occasion and this year was no different, as families remembered their precious babies and wrote messages attached to lanterns containing candles, which were placed around the war memorial to create a wave of light. The evening event also included poems and music.

Baby Loss Awareness Week takes place every year from 9-15 October. Throughout the week bereaved parents, family members and friends commemorate the all-too-brief lives of their babies, knowing that thousands of other families elsewhere in the world are doing the same. The week also provides an opportunity to raise awareness of babyloss.

See page 14 for details of our 2017 Wave of Light event.

Have your say!

We want to know what bereaved parents think about SPRING, including what we do and how we are run.

We will be running workshops to hear your views, so please look out for details on the usual SPRING channels (Facebook, website, email). In the meantime, if you have ideas or feedback about SPRING, please email friends@springsupport.org.uk



Babies remembered at SPRING Christmas event...

Bereaved parents, families and friends filled St Mary's Church on Longfleet Road for SPRING's annual Christmas Event on Saturday 26 November.

The Christmas tree, decorated with messages, was a fitting and poignant centrepiece, standing proudly at the front of the church, throughout the event. Moving music performed by the New Bourne (Royal College of Midwives) Choir and friends, and saxophonist Mark Pitman was another highlight. Guests also took part, singing carols, accompanied by Ivor Mullins on the organ. Towards the end of the event, children attending also provided music, singing along with Jill and Declan Turner.

At the end, there was cake (lots of it!) baked by SPRING volunteers, and refreshments served by Poole Hospital volunteers. We were also joined by Judy's Jams who sold homemade jams and chutneys in aid of SPRING.

Thank you to everyone who came along, and huge thanks to all the volunteers, speakers, performers, and everyone else involved, who helped to make the event so special.



... and The Snowdrop Walk

Dozens of families braved the cold for SPRING's annual Snowdrop Walk on Saturday 11 February at Kingston Lacy.



Photos by Karen Bale.

It was a beautiful event, as bereaved parents, families and friends wrote messages of remembrance, which were tied around a tree surrounded by snowdrops. The walk around the garden was lovely as the snowdrops were in full bloom, and the snow flurries at the beginning somehow added to the very special atmosphere. Afterwards, families came in from the cold to enjoy tea and cake.



Thank you to everyone who came along – and to all those who helped make the event happen.

Little Snowdrop

*The world may never notice if a snowdrop
doesn't bloom,
Or even pause to wonder if the petals fall too soon.
But every life that ever forms or even comes to be,
Touches the world in some small way for all eternity.
The little one we longed for was swiftly here
and gone,
But the love that was then planted is a light that still
shines on.
And though our arms are empty our hearts
know what to do,
Every beating of our hearts says that we love you.
Author Unknown*

The Early Pregnancy Clinic

The Early Pregnancy Clinic is run from the Harbourside Gynaecology Centre, B5 Poole Hospital, seven days a week (8.30am - 12 noon) with dedicated scanning.

The Early Pregnancy Clinic is a member of the Association of Early Pregnancy Units, which has a national membership, and aims to improve the standard of care given in early pregnancy loss. The Clinic is for women referred by a GP or midwife who have bleeding and abdominal pain between 6 and 14 weeks' gestation.

The intention of the clinic is to fast-track care of women threatening to miscarry, give reassurance with viable

pregnancy, quality care and support to those miscarrying, and early detection and management of ectopic pregnancy. There is a doctor, registered nurse and counsellor in attendance at this clinic.

You can reach Shonagh Gibb, Early Pregnancy Nurse Counsellor at Poole Hospital in the Early Pregnancy Unit on 01202 448432.

Our story about Baby Wicking

by Katie Wicking

Having a second child was all we ever wished for. We planned for ages making sure it was the right time to fall pregnant and I did straight away. Never did it enter our minds anything would go wrong.

I had a lot of pains and cramps in the early stages but if anything happened, no-one could do anything. The pains eased and we were looking forward to our first 12 week scan. However we must have had our dates miscalculated as we were about a week out at only 11 weeks. Due to this, we were told to come back the following week to have the health screening and blood tests. Nothing else was said other than baby's heartbeat was strong and see you next week. As nothing else was mentioned and we had received scan pictures, we were too excited to wait and told our four-year old daughter Isabella the exciting news. She was over the moon about becoming a big sister.

“Our worse fears and dreams started to come true”

The following week, we returned to the hospital and our world started to shatter with the beginning of bad news. The sonographer said she could see an abnormality and went to get a second opinion. We were told our baby had an exomphalos of the bowels, where they were growing outside of the body in a separate sack. When the senior midwife was explaining this, there was still

hope. Operations could be carried out with the baby having a good chance of survival. But to be certain they arranged for us to come back the next day where a consultant from Southampton Hospital was to confirm with another scan and possible other tests.

When we returned our worse fears and dreams started to come true. Our precious little baby had many more medical complications and conditions. The consultant, without doubt, confirmed our baby had either Trisomy 18 (Edward Syndrome) or Trisomy 13 (Patau Syndrome). The survival rates for these conditions were slim to none and the quality of life that our baby would have weren't good. The consultant recommended termination – we were devastated! This option is one I thought I would never have to consider during pregnancy and even though I know deep down it was the right decision there is always that element of guilt I will live with forever. Not only did we lose our baby but we were letting our daughter down with her wish to become a big sister. We were heartbroken and I felt completely to blame for it all.

On 10 February 2016 our little precious Baby Bobby Wicking grew his wings.



“Baby Bobby Wicking grew his wings”

condition, which past birth was unlikely to survive hours let alone days.

Bournemouth Hospital provided great support and advice for us. They arranged for us to have Bobby cremated and there is a service for early pregnancy losses, which really helped us grieve and say our goodbyes. We now have a butterfly memorial plaque in the gardens at Bournemouth crematorium.

They also put me in touch with SPRING. This charity provided me with one-to-one counselling, which gave me the opportunity to grieve openly without judgement, talk about my feelings and how to understand them. It surprised me how many people feel it's easy to move on and forget. SPRING made me realise that it's OK to grieve and I have every right to remember, cherish and never forget my little boy. I cannot thank SPRING enough for the support they provided me with during this time and for getting me through some hard times and certain dates I was dreading. They also made me remember I have a wonderful loving husband and a beautiful daughter who also needed supporting through this time.

I also had some great support from a few friends and family. One couple in particular, Sarah and Grant, reached out and were there whenever I needed to talk. They too have also sadly experienced a baby loss. They lost their beautiful baby girl Myla Violet Ashworth in October 2013 at full term. Something so tragic and painful that affected us all and Myla will never be forgotten. How



We had a post mortem arranged to confirm which syndrome it was and to confirm if there was anything to prevent us from having a healthy baby in the future. It was confirmed we had a little boy and he had Edwards Syndrome, a rare

Poetry Corner



they got through their loss and came out so strong I will never know.

Sarah and Grant are truly inspirational who since the loss of Myla have been raising awareness and money for SANDS, the charity that supported them through the dark time in their lives. This year was no exception. For Myla's third anniversary they held a charity ball in her honour. During the ball a raffle and silent auction took place, and with this and the ticket sales, they raised over £8,000. Sarah and Grant decided for this charity event they would split the money between three charities. Firstly 50% would go to SANDS then the remaining 50% would be split between SPRING for the help they provided us and in memory of our little boy, and CLAPA (Cleft Lip and Palate Association), which helps families who need support with children who were born with craniofacial abnormality. We also have close friends of ours whose baby girl was born with cleft lip and palate.

With the money raised, I hope SPRING can continue with their amazing work in supporting families through these difficult times and also continue to hold the special events for us to remember our loved ones in heaven. I also hope that more people become aware of how much baby loss affects so many people but yet stays such a taboo subject or something that isn't forgotten and moved on from once you experience it. As those reading this most probably know that's not the case.

“I have every right to remember, cherish and never forget my little boy”

Thank you SPRING for everything, thank you Sarah and Grant for your support and money raised for this charity close to our hearts, thank you to friends and family (you know who you are) who have been there for us, thank you to Bournemouth Hospital and thank you to my wonderful husband Barry and daughter Isabella, who have stayed tough and been my rock but yet who have also been grieving for our baby loss. Words cannot express my gratitude to everyone.

Where's my baby?

My belly grows round and hard,
It's starting to feel real.
Where's my baby?
There you are.

The ultrasound sends a thrill down my spine throb, throb.
"There's the baby's heart beat"
Where's my baby?
There you are.

"No wonder you've been feeling sick, there's two of them"
blind panic sets in
How will we cope?
Where's my baby?... wait make that two.

I feel a tickle from within,
a flicker of life.
Where are my babies?
There they are.

"I'm so sorry, there's something wrong"
My heart stops, my world shakes.
Where are my babies?
What's going on?

"There's nothing to be done, the babies are too young"
My heart breaks, I'm swimming in black.
Where are my babies?
Are you still there?

I look into the faces of my daughters, so still and silent.
Enchanted by their beauty.
Where are my babies?
There they are.

We leave the hospital, no carry cots in hand.
Eyes to the ground,
Where are my babies?
They are gone.

The hearse pulls up, we clutch a precious white coffin.
It is time to say goodbye.
Where are my babies?
I'm not sure I can do this...

A baby's cry pierces like a knife in my heart,
Where are my babies?
Is that my girls?
Do they need me?

The nights seem so long,
As images and memories flash through my mind.
Where are my babies?
Could I have done more?

I stand in the room that should have housed my baby girls.
Where are my babies?
Oh what should have been...

Time passes by and a friend obsesses about her daughter's party.
Where are my babies?
Oh what would I have done for you?

I hear the name's Mia or Clara, the name of my girls,
a stabbing in my heart.
Where are my babies?
Why do you get this life, and my girls miss out?

I sense you close to me,
I imagine two little girls with curly blond hair clutching my hand.
Where are my babies?
There you are.

I look at yellow roses and I think of you fondly,
Always my children of God.
Where are my babies?
There you are.

Mia and Clara,
engrained on my heart,
engrained on my soul.
Always with me,
until we meet at my last breath.

Written by Kate Gough

Baby Theo by Steph Rustom

It felt like the most surreal and exciting experience of my life the day I walked, alone, out of the Wessex Fertility in Southampton with the possibility of a new life growing inside my womb.

My husband was in France on our holiday and I flew out that night to join him with hope in my heart.

That day was the end of our seven-year journey to conceive.

Paul and I got married in August 2008 and I came off the pill that very day to start the family I'd always dreamed of. We tried everything for three years to get pregnant with ovulation kits and calendars but it just never happened. In May 2011 we moved to Bournemouth and I decided to get referred to get us both checked out. We were told after a few tests that there was no reason why I should not have conceived and maybe IVF was the best route to take.

“I totally loved being pregnant... I felt well and healthy and complete”

We decided not to go for IVF straight away as we were not eligible for a “free go” and put ourselves forward to become adopters as we felt the money might be better spent giving a child already here a better life. After six months of soul searching and training, we were approved as adopters and felt very excited at the prospect of giving a child a loving home. Eighteen months passed and still no match was found, so in June 2015 I said to my husband that maybe we should accept we were never going to have children. By this time I was nearly 41 years old and felt time was definitely running out.

After discussing our situation with our family, we were encouraged not to give up and arranged an appointment with Wessex Fertility. They were amazing and explained



that because of my age, I would have a higher chance of conceiving with a donor egg than with using my own. They found us a match pretty much immediately and I started the drugs at the end of July to prepare my body for pregnancy.

The cycle was a complete success and I found out I was pregnant on 14 September 2015 and our miracle was there growing inside me.

We couldn't believe it, after all those years that we had been given this chance. I totally loved being pregnant, I wasn't sick or tired. I felt well and healthy and complete.

It was seven days before Christmas when we went to Bournemouth for our 20 week scan and we were both so excited to be finding out the sex of our baby to announce at the Christmas table. I knew he was a boy from about 10 weeks in my heart though.

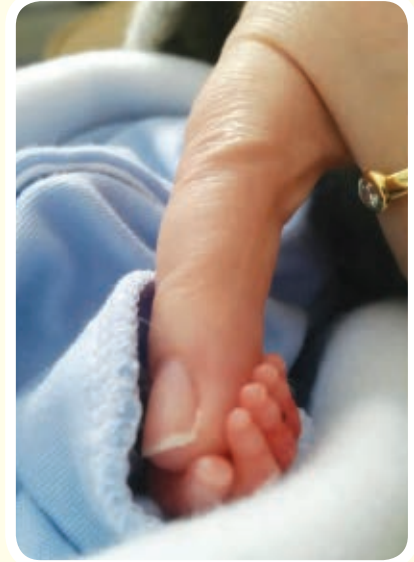
The scan was going very well but she was having difficulty scanning his legs so kept sending me out for a wee and tipping me upside down on the bed. Eventually, she called another midwife and told us to wait in another room because she was concerned about his legs. They were too short.

We were baffled and really nervous waiting in that little room, until eventually the midwife came in and said we were to go to Poole the

“Those three days were just torture but we tried to stay positive”

following Monday to see a specialist. Those three days were just torture but we tried to stay positive hoping that he may just have short legs.

The reality was much, much worse. On 21 December, four days before Christmas, we were told that our little baby boy had skeletal dysplasia and his heart filled his little chest so his lungs would never develop properly. It was the worst day of my life. We were taken to another little room and given a cup of tea and I remember thinking this is just like being in a tragic movie, the disbelief was so intense.



“We spent Christmas and New Year in a daze”

The specialist told us he would like us to have a second opinion at Southampton after Christmas, which we attended but we both knew it was over. The second opinion confirmed that his condition was lethal and he would not survive the pregnancy.

We spent Christmas and New Year in a daze and I was booked into the SPRING suite at Poole on 6 January 2016.

The staff at Bournemouth Hospital had been amazing and on arrival at the SPRING suite the care was second to none.

I had no idea what to expect and I was induced at midday on the Wednesday and the contractions started about half an hour later.

Little Theo was born 11.30am on Friday 8 January almost 48 hours after we arrived. He did not want to come out and he arrived against all odds with a heartbeat and we had him for a whole two hours which was such a very, very precious time for us.

I remember staring at him in awe, he was just the most perfect little doll-like poppet I had ever seen and he looked so much like his Daddy. I loved him so, so much. He was a gift.

The staff were absolutely incredible throughout those 48 hours at SPRING, running around getting me ice and cold drinks, and mopping my brow, and laughing with me when no one could get any blood out of me, and the gas and air kept my sense of humour going!

“ I will always see that day as the best and worst day of my life ”

I will always see that day that Theo was born as the best and worst day of my life. It was a privilege to give birth (something I thought I might never do) and an honour to be a mother, but the hardest walk to the car ever when I left him behind.

The days and weeks to follow were awful, just so painful, but the bereavement midwives knew exactly how to make that process easier.

They knew we would need to see him again three times before we could say goodbye. They knew I would worry about him going for his autopsy, would he be cold? Did he have his blanket on or his hat? They knew all of this and they rang us, reassured us, visited us and helped arrange the funeral for us.

All these touches were invaluable and so very important to us that we can't thank the team and the charity enough for the support we have been given.

When we could finally collect Theo's ashes from the funeral directors, we decided to put them into a blue cuddly rabbit so I could hold him and snuggle him at night. We call the rabbit bubsy bunny or Theo-bubs and he sometimes sits with us at night on the sofa. It just works for us.

I have had counselling, which SPRING provide and that has really helped the healing process too.

When we lost Theo, I vowed to do everything in my power to get pregnant again by the end of 2016, and after two more IVF attempts I am now 26 weeks pregnant. This new journey is terrifying but the support of SPRING is still there and for that I will be eternally gratefully.

Thank you SPRING for giving me the opportunity to share my story and for everything you do.

Baby Isaac

by Emily Whitmore

My husband Joel and I lost our first baby at 22 weeks in March 2016.

Our baby was a little boy and we called him Isaac, which means laughter. We discovered that very sadly Isaac had died due to severe foetal hydrops. We took the decision for him to be born naturally – he was beautiful.

We arrived at the SPRING suite at 8.30am where we were looked after by a midwife who was the kindest lady I had ever met. She made us feel comfortable and chatted to us about the day ahead.

I delivered our beautiful sleeping baby boy at 7.16pm. The hardest moment of our lives was knowing we weren't going to take our baby boy home. We spent the rest of the evening with Isaac, telling stories, reading poems and telling him how much we loved him and that he was just too precious for this world.

We decided at about 11.30pm that I wanted to go home. The next day we went back to the suite to see Isaac, where we just

sat holding our angel. We created lasting memories of our baby boy to treasure forever. Isaac, who we love so very much, will always be our first baby and not a day goes by that we don't think of him.

We were also given us a special memory box full of beautiful items and memories, including photos, hand and foot prints, a candle and a teddy bear. This was all made possible with the support and love from SPRING at Poole Maternity Hospital.

This was a harrowing experience for Joel and I but was made slightly more bearable with the incredible support at the SPRING suite, which included private separate accommodation away from the Maternity Unit.

Bereavement midwives, a fabulous Chaplain and a very understanding undertaker – AMAZING.

We continued to be supported by a bereavement support midwife until we felt the time had come where we no longer needed the support.

We wanted to help others who have unfortunately had to deal with this awful experience and to give something back to the charity to say thank you so we



organised a Body Balance class, where we raised a total of £1,001.95

I am now 32 weeks pregnant with our Rainbow baby and although it is a worrying and emotional time, we are very much looking forward to meeting Isaacs's baby brother and telling him all about Isaac.

“ We created lasting memories of our baby boy to treasure forever ”



“ The hardest moment of our lives was knowing we weren't taking our baby boy home ”



SPRING would like to welcome all new Rainbow Babies.

Why Rainbow Babies?

The idea is that the new baby is like a rainbow after a storm. The beauty of the rainbow does not negate the ravages of the storm. When a rainbow appears, it does not mean the storm never happened – or that the family is not still dealing with its aftermath. What it means is that something beautiful and full of light has appeared in the midst of the darkness and clouds. Storm clouds may still hover but the rainbow provides a counter balance of colour, energy and hope.

Baby Anthony Junior and Rainbow Nimi

by Clare Sims

Back in 2002 I was a student nurse and already a mum to my three-year old son, Callan, with my long term childhood sweetheart when I found I was pregnant with our second child.

My pregnancy with my first son who born in February 1999 at Poole Hospital, was trouble-free - I was blooming and loved every moment of it. I had a normal delivery and he was born two weeks late weighing 8lb 5oz.

July 2002, I found I was pregnant. Our baby was due in March 2003. My pregnancy wasn't as straight forward. I had a lot of bleeding in the first couple of months to the extent I thought I had miscarried. But a scan showed the pregnancy still intact and a healthy heartbeat. I began to get bigger and all seemed to be going well. Until mid-November. I was at home, just put my son to bed, when I felt that I had wet myself. Confused, I went to the bathroom and was leaking clear water. I began to get some pains. This was new to me as they had to break my waters with my first son.

“I thought I was in a nightmare. I couldn't believe what was happening”

I went to the bedroom with a towel between my legs as the water kept leaking. I called my husband who was working in London (we lived in Bournemouth). Then called my mum. When she arrived, we had to wake my son up and she took me to the hospital (Poole).

I was terrified.

They monitored me and gave me a scan and medication of some description as they told me I was in labour.

I was horrified and distraught as I was 23 weeks pregnant.

Things started to ease off and I was kept on bed rest all week. Until the terrible morning of 28 November 2002. I woke up early and knew I was experiencing contractions. The doctors couldn't stop it any longer and they rushed me down to delivery.

I was in a daze and was totally overwhelmed with shock and upset, but hope that my baby would be OK.

I delivered my baby boy who we named Anthony Junior, sometime that morning. As soon as I gave the final push, the doctors rushed him out of the room. But came back what seemed like hours later with sad expressions. They brought baby Anthony in for us to hold and to spend his last moments of life with him as even though he was alive, they said his lungs were too tiny and that they were so sorry, there is nothing they could do.

I thought I was in a nightmare. I couldn't believe this was happening. I was in shock and a daze. We took turns holding him, talking to him, kissing him and telling him how much we loved him. Until he finally went to sleep forever in my husband's arms.

He was perfect and looked just like his older brother, just much smaller.

I will never forget the midwife who was amazing. She took pictures, dressed him and placed him in a moses basket, and took his hand and footprints for us to keep. She gave me a bed bath as I sat uncontrollably sobbing.

“I was in a daze and was totally overwhelmed”

We were moved to the SPRING suite where we had the support of the staff and chaplains.

We had a funeral for him at Bournemouth Crematorium where he is buried. We wrote in the remembrance book in the Chapel in Poole Hospital.



It was the worst time of my life. When I went to the florist to order flowers for the funeral, the woman who was working that day was a woman who I knew from a mum and toddler group I took my son to. She was also pregnant and due March. It was heartbreaking to see her and she burst into tears when she saw me.

Thankfully I had the support of friends and family, who would do food shopping for us as I couldn't face going out. I couldn't sleep. But having my son got me through.

A few months later I discovered I was pregnant again. It was actually the last thing on my mind and we just didn't think it would happen so soon after baby Anthony.

“Throughout my pregnancy, I was on edge the whole time”

I was terrified. It transpired that I had Group B Strep and that is why I lost baby Anthony.

Throughout my pregnancy, I was on edge the whole time and would start to relax at each milestone. After the first scan, at 23 weeks, etc. The doctors kept a close eye on me. When at our scan appointment we found out that our baby was due on the 28 November 2003 - Baby Anthony's one year anniversary when he was born - I went cold. Even if we had planned it that way, there is no way we could have made that happen.



Our baby girl Nimi was thankfully born safely one week early on 23 November. We stayed in hospital a few extra days as I had to have antibiotics at the birth.

In the October 2003, just before I was due to give birth, we sadly found out my Mum had cancer. She got to meet Nimi before she tragically passed away at the age of 44 on 24 January 2004. I was 24 at the time.

Later that year I went back to my nursing career. And I'm now a sister in the operating theatre.

My eldest son is now 17, doing his A-levels and going to uni this year to study law, and my daughter Nimi is now 13, very sporty, always competing in sports tournaments and athletics clubs.

We still visit the cemetery regularly and always remember baby Anthony.

Me and my then-partner split up a few years later as everything that had happened took its toll.

I am now remarried to the love of my life who has been nothing but supportive.

It was the worst time of my life losing my baby. But somehow I made it through.

On our last visit to the cemetery at Christmas time, Nimi asked if Anthony was here now how old would he be and said she would have liked two older brothers. I delicately explained that if



“It was the worst time of my life losing my baby, but somehow I made it through”

Anthony was born when he was supposed to be (March 2003) and was here, she would not be. For some reason I feel baby Anthony gave his life so that Nimi could be here instead.

Would you like to share your story!

We are very grateful to people who share their stories, because we know real stories make a real difference to readers who may have had similar experiences.

We feature stories about baby loss (at any stage of pregnancy, at, or just after birth – whatever the circumstances and however long ago), as well as stories about rainbow babies (who are born after loss). If you would like to share your story for a future edition of the SPRING newsletter, please do get in touch by emailing friends@springsupport.org.uk

Running for Joshua

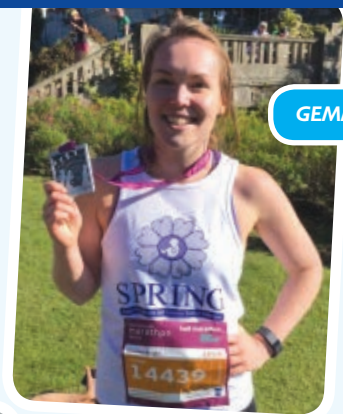
by Becky Knight

We are very grateful to SPRING for the support they gave us after we lost our son Joshua on 12 May 2016. We decided that instead of people giving flowers or gifts at Joshua's thanksgiving service, we would ask them to donate money in Joshua's memory to SPRING. This kick started our fundraising campaign for the charity.

Our family and friends wanted to do all they could to help raise money for the charity that had helped us so much. On 2 October, Joshua's Auntie Gemma and Uncle Dan ran the Bournemouth and Cardiff Half Marathons. A whole team of supporters turned up to support Gemma in the Bournemouth Half Marathon, including myself and Sam who were cheering on from the sidelines with banners and chocolate! We saw lots of other runners on the day also raising money for SPRING which was really encouraging to see.

Our friend Alice, who lives in Malaysia also took part in the Penang 10K on 27 November – she managed to raise over £500 for SPRING.

Altogether we have now raised £3500 and counting. We are so thankful for the support we have received and continue to receive from SPRING, and we know the money we have raised will go towards helping other families like us in their time of need.



GEMMA



DAN



ALICE

Hair salon raises money for SPRING



Staff at Studio 3 Hair and Beauty in Wimborne organised a Christmas lucky number draw with staff and clients taking part in the festivities.



The winner of the draw was regular client, June Witt, who won a goody hamper and a free visit. June nominated SPRING to benefit from the proceeds of the draw.

Special thanks to June Witt for nominating SPRING, and Karen and the rest of the team at Studio 3 for organising the draw – your support is very much appreciated.

Are you fundraising?

If you are fundraising – whether you're running, riding or baking, or perhaps even jumping out of a plane – we'd love to shout about it!

To share your story about your fundraising successes – or if you're planning to raise money and awareness for SPRING – please email friends@springsupport.org.uk

Golf Day for SPRING by Barclays and Roberts

In October, Emma Farrell from Barclays Premier Banking in conjunction with Andrew Dawson from Roberts Letting and Estate Agents in Charminster, hosted a golf day at Dudsbury Golf Club in aid of SPRING.

Around 40 clients attended the day, which involved an 18 hole round of golf, followed by a three course dinner as well as a silent auction and raffle.

The event raised over £4000 for SPRING, as Barclays match funded money raised.

Thank you from SPRING for raising money – and awareness – it's so very much appreciated!



SPRING to benefit from Co-op Local Community Fund

A Co-op store in Poole has chosen SPRING as one of three local charities to benefit from its Local Community Fund.

The scheme means 1% from every Co-op branded purchase made by Co-op card members, plus the proceeds from the sale of carrier bags, will be split between SPRING and the other two nominated charities. The scheme applies to stores in Ashely Road and Good Road in Parkstone, and Co-op Funeral Services on Ringwood Road. SPRING will be a beneficiary for six months and will use the money raised to support bereaved parents.

At the end of January, SPRING was invited to attend the opening of the newly refurbished store in Good Road along with the other local charities. It was lovely to see the support from the local community, and to have the chance to chat with people about the good work that SPRING does.

Visit www.coop.co.uk/membership/local-community-fund/ for more information about about Co-op's Local Community Fund.



Thank you!

A huge thank you to everyone who raises money and awareness for SPRING – including bereaved parents, family and friends, local businesses, community groups and voluntary organisations. Every donation – however small or large – helps SPRING to provide support for families who experience baby loss. So thank you so very much!

Calling all bakers for Open Gardens event!

SPRING will be providing refreshments at 24a Western Avenue, Branksome Park, Poole, when the garden is open to the public on 30 April and 30 July, as part of the National Gardens Scheme (NGS) Open Gardens programme.

After visitors have looked around the beautiful one-acre garden, they can then enjoy tea, coffee and cake supplied by SPRING – with all proceeds going to us!

The Open Gardens events at Western Avenue are always popular and SPRING receives many compliments about the cakes we provide.

If you'd like to donate your baking prowess and provide a cake or two – or if you'd like to help out on the day - please get in touch. For more information, please email friends@springsupport.org.uk or call Sara Fripp in the SPRING office on 01202 448084.



SPRING's Wave of Light Event

Sunday 15 October
Memorial Garden,
Poole Park
6.30 - 7.15pm

Bereaved parents, families and friends are invited to join us at our Global Wave of Light Event as we mark the end of Baby Loss Awareness Week.

All around the world, parents, families and friends light a candle in remembrance of their baby at 7pm local time.

At the event, we will read poems and we will light candles in memory of all the babies who lit up our lives for such a short time.

For more information, please email friends@springsupport.org.uk



Following the success of previous events, SPRING will be organising further Rainbow meet-ups this year. Our rainbow events are for families with children born before or after loss. Watch this space for more details - or email friends@springsupport.org.uk to find out more.

Nearly new sales in aid of SPRING

**Hamworthy Scout Hall,
Beccles Close, Hamworthy
BH15 4BS**

To donate or register to sell, email thehelenhunt@yahoo.co.uk

Saturday 1 April (2-3.30pm)
Saturday 7 October (2-3.30pm)
Saturday 2 December (2-3.30pm)

**Broadstone Methodist
Church, Lower Blandford
Road, Broadstone BH18 8DP**

To donate or register to sell, email cliffandjanetsibley@hotmail.com

Saturday 18 March (2-3.30pm)
Saturday 13 May (2-3.30pm)
Saturday 3 June (2-3.30pm)
Saturday 16 September (2-3.30pm)
Saturday 18 November (2-3.30pm)

Admission is £1 per adult / FREE for children (includes tea, coffee and squash). Home-made cakes are also for sale. Donations of children's clothes, toys, books and baby equipment welcome.

Key Dates

MARCH

Wed 1st – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Sat 4th – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.

APRIL

Sat 1st – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.

Wed 5th – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Sun 30th – Open Gardens event (afternoon), 24a Western Avenue, Branksome Park, Poole BH13 7AN.

MAY

Wed 3rd – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Sat 6th – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.



SPRING AGM - Date and venue tbc – look out for details.

JUNE

Sat 3rd – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.

Wed 7th – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

JULY

Sat 1st – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.

Wed 5th – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Sun 30th – Open Gardens event (afternoon), 24a Western Avenue, Branksome Park, Poole BH13 7AN.

AUGUST

Wed 2nd – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Sat 5th – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.

SEPTEMBER

Sat 2nd – Coffee Morning (10.30am-12.30pm), The Coffee House, 10 Adastral Square, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8SA.

Wed 6th – Open Support Meeting (7.30-9pm), St Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, First Floor), Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Open Support Meetings

Monthly open support meetings are held at St. Mary's Longfleet Church Centre (Room 1b, 1st Floor) Kingston Road, Poole BH15 2LT.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30 - 9pm

Coffee Mornings – an update

Until recently, SPRING ran two coffee mornings every month (on the first Saturday of the month in Canford Heath, and the last Wednesday of the month in Winton). However, due to a change in circumstances, the usual host of the Wednesday events is no longer available. The monthly Saturday coffee mornings will continue to take place. And we are considering what we can do about running a weekday meet-up for the future. We'll keep you posted!

Coffee Mornings

Would you like to meet with other parents who may have shared similar experiences?

SPRING Coffee Mornings take place every month and are an opportunity for bereaved parents to meet in an informal and relaxed environment. Children, other family members and friends are welcome too.

Details of coffee mornings are on the SPRING website and Facebook page. Or for more information, email friends@springsupport.org.uk



GET INVOLVED

There are lots of ways to get involved in supporting SPRING. Here are just a few ideas.

We welcome all suggestions that could help SPRING continue to be parent-led and provide support to bereaved parents and families.



If you'd like to get involved, please get in touch!



The Baby Mailing Preference Service helps reduce the number of baby-related mailings you receive.

In the sad circumstances of the death of a baby, mailings to parents about baby products from well meaning companies can cause unintended hurt.

By registering with Baby MPS you can reduce the number of unwanted mailings you receive.

Contact MPS:

Tel: 020 7291 3310

Email: babymps@dma.org.uk

www.mpsonline.org.uk

How to Make a Donation

We are always in need of your help so we can carry on helping families during their difficult times.

We are members of the Just Giving Website. It's an excellent idea. Essentially it means that visitors to our website can donate money and/or gifts to SPRING online. Any items we receive are automatically transferred to the SPRING account and SPRING gets the full benefit immediately. Also, Gift Aid can be added automatically so that SPRING benefits even more.



You can find out more about donating by visiting:

<http://www.justgiving.com/springsupport/donate>

You can set up your own fundraising page for SPRING

by logging on to: <http://www.justgiving.com/springsupport/raisemoney>



Follow us on Facebook

...and keep up to date with latest news, announcements and other members

Search for us at **SPRING Support**

For more information or support – or to make a donation – contact SPRING:

Call 01202 448084 (24 hour answerphone) **Email: friends@springsupport.org.uk**

c/o St Mary's Maternity Unit, St Mary's Road, Poole, Dorset BH15 2JB

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