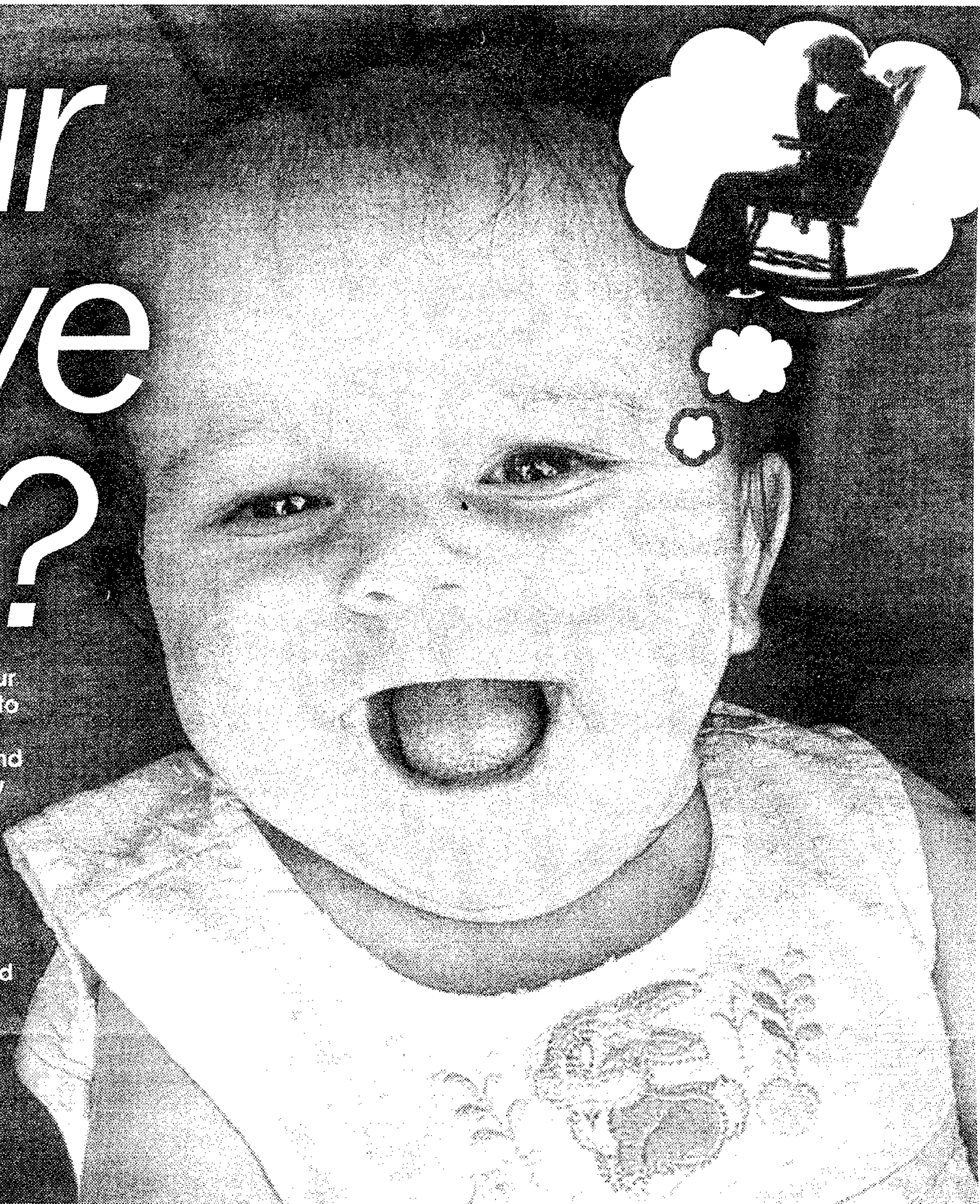


Will your baby live to 100?



A THIRD of all babies born in the UK in the past 12 months will live to the ripe old age of 100, according to the Office for National Statistics.

This is put down to better medical science but environmental factors also have a huge part to play.

One of those potential centenarians is ten-month-old Annie Axworthy, pictured.

But what are her chances of making it to three figures?

Mum Clare, 34, from north London, said: "We

all want the best for our children. I want Annie to live a long, prosperous life filled with health and happiness. But just how long will that life be?

"If she makes it she will celebrate her centenary in 2112 – and she might get a card from Prince William and Kate's child congratulating her."

Here, Clare looks at her lifestyle and what she can do to improve Annie's chances of making it to the big 1-0-0.

FRIENDS

CLARE says: "We socialise with friends or family most weekends.

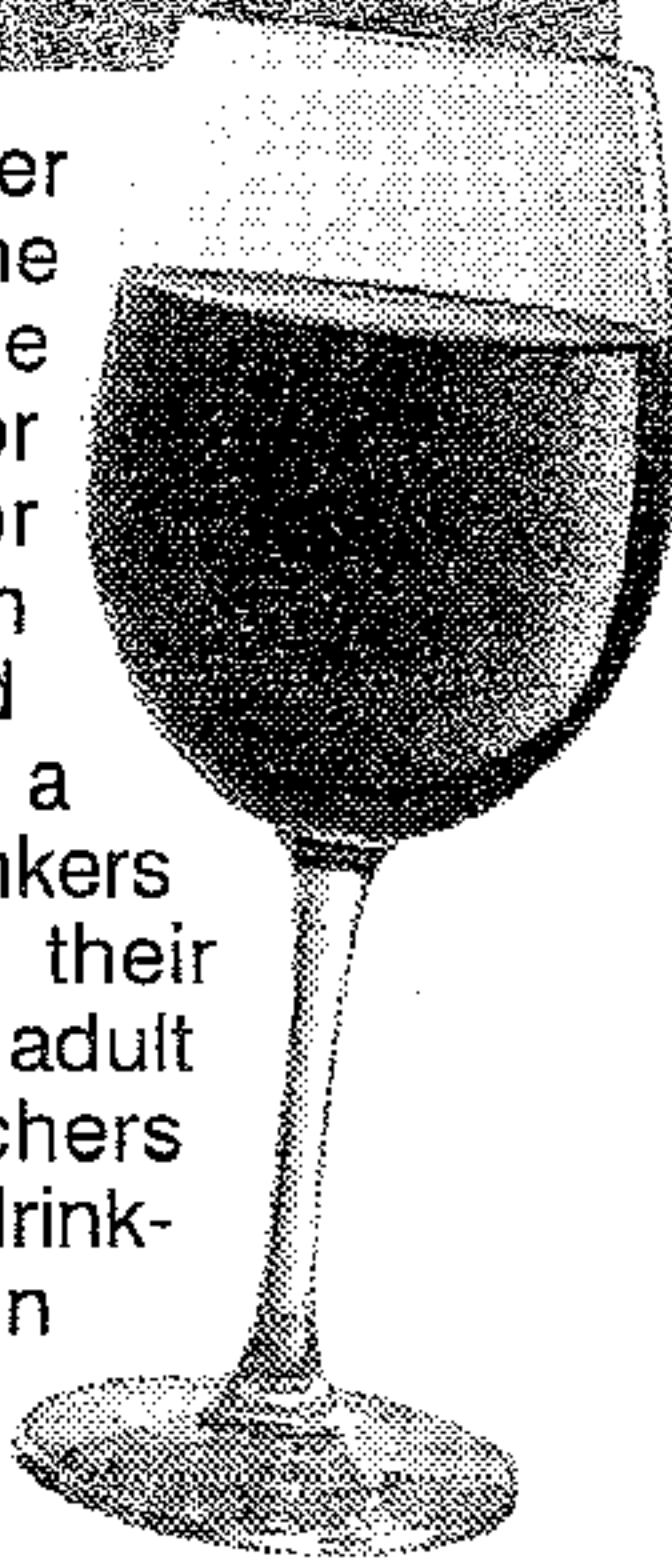
"Annie goes to nursery where she has a big circle of friends and staff who care for her. She's really well socialised and spends a lot of time with her grandparents, too."

Dr Thomas Glass, of the Harvard School of Public Health, says socialising can prolong life. His 13-year study looked at 2,671 ageing men and women. He says: "It is clear from our study that social engagement can have as much effect on prolonging life as fitness activities.

"Social and productive activities lower the risk of all causes of death as much as exercise does."

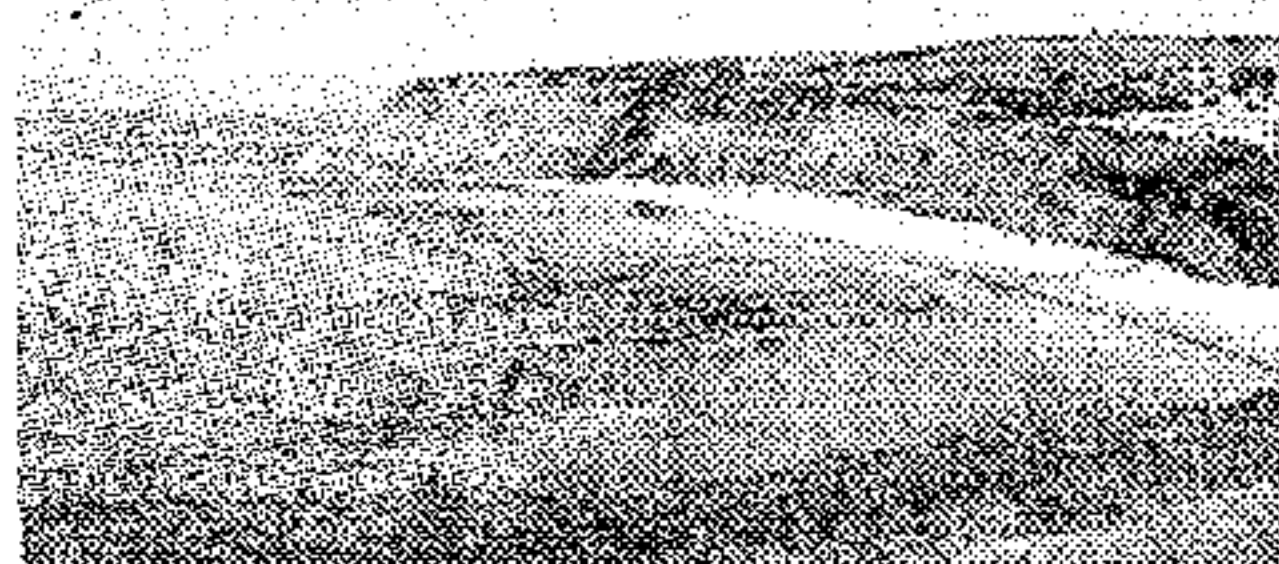
ALCOHOL

BOTH Clare and her husband Jon drink one or two glasses of wine with dinner or a beer or two for him three or four times a week. An NHS study revealed kids who grow up in a home with alcohol drinkers are likely to drink in their teens. If she drinks in adult life, Italian researchers recently claimed that drinking alcohol in moderation cuts risk of death from any cause by 18 per cent.



LOCATION

THE family live in London but spend as much time as they can with relatives in Devon. A study in the New England Journal of Medicine found dirty air can trigger inflammatory reactions that can contribute to heart disease. People living with good air quality live about one year longer than people in more polluted areas.



FAMILY

CLARE says: "I have an 86-year-old grandmother, one grandad died in his 50s, the other in his 70s and my other grandmother died aged 74.

"My husband's grandparents all passed on in their 70s and 80s."

Professor Paola Sabastiani, a biostatistician at Boston University, says living to 100 and beyond often runs in families.

She says: "These families might share healthy lifestyles, but it also suggests that there is a strong genetic background to exceptional longevity."

MARRIAGE

JON and Clare married in 2006, five years before Annie was born. But should she want to live to 100, she'd be better off avoiding marriage.

Age expert Dr Tom Perls says large numbers of the post-100 population are spinsters.

He says: "A surprisingly large proportion of our centenarian women never married, even though marriage was an important goal for young women of this generation."



DIET

THEY rarely rely on processed foods and cook all family meals from scratch.

Clare says: "We all get our five portions a day at meal times and snacks between meals tend to be wholemeal bread sticks or fruit."

Last July a study at Wisconsin University found a diet reduced to 25 to 30 per cent fewer calories than normal extended the lives of rhesus monkeys. The well-fed primates fell victim to diabetes, cancer, brain and heart disease more frequently than their more restricted counterparts.

Restricting calories lowers blood pressure, cholesterol levels and diabetes risk, which all translate into extra years of life.

SLEEP

"WE'RE pretty sleep deprived," says Clare.

"We have two other children – Eddie, eight, and Sam, three – so eight hours a night would be a luxury. It's not uncommon for us to wake up with Sam in our bed.

"Annie sleeps very well, though – one or two naps of between half an hour and an hour a day, and her bedtime routine is bath and then bed at 7.30pm.

"She rarely stirs before 7.30am." Dr Tom Perls, founder and director of the New England Centenarian study, says routinely not getting enough sleep deducts one year from your life.

EXERCISE

WITH three children, Clare doesn't have much time for the gym.

But the two older kids get plenty of exercise – playing football or cricket in the garden, or in the park playing on the swings and running around.

In his book *Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*, Dr Deepak Chopra says consistent, low-level activity, even as little as walking 30 minutes a day, can provide much of the longevity benefit of rigorous exercise.

