

SO SORRY I HAD TO DESERT YOU & BABY

Dad misses birth for Sahara tribute



By JESSICA LAWRENCE

A DAD missed the birth of his SEVENTH child — because he was running across the Sahara in memory of his dead wife.

Brave Michael Kirkum signed up for the gruelling 155 mile Marathon des Sables in Morocco as a tribute to childhood sweetheart Janet, 43, who died from heart disease two years ago.

Despite falling for new love Mandy, 36, the dad vowed to conquer the five-day charity race — even though she was **EIGHT MONTHS** pregnant.

Baby Keira, *above with mum and dad*, was born on April 3 while Michael was racing in the desert.

Memory

Butcher Michael, 46, from Kilwinning, Ayrshire, said: "I was devastated when I lost my wife and wanted to do something in her memory.

"A year after Janet died

I met Mandy and we discovered we were having a baby not long after that.

"I wasn't going to go away but Mandy was very supportive. We thought I'd be back before the birth.

"I was setting out on the fourth day when I heard Keira had been born."

Adventurer Michael was forced to pull out of the race with a broken shoulder five years ago.

He was offered the chance to run it again to raise funds for the British Heart Foundation and hopes to collect more than £2,000 for the charity.

Michael said: "It was extremely gruelling but nothing compared to losing Janet."

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Marathon man... dad Michael ran across Sahara