

“Don’t Forget Betty”

Christmas 2018

I was writing an immediate family tree for my children which included aunties, uncles, cousins etc. when my mum said “Don’t forget Betty” Betty was born in 1956 and sadly passed away at 7-8 months old due to cot death. As there was not the money for a private burial, she was just taken away and no one knew where she had been laid to rest.

After Christmas I gave some thought to what my mum had said and decided to see if I could trace her or any information. A relative had a copy of Betty’s death certificate, so I got in touch to get any details from it. There was an address on the death certificate so I made that my starting point.



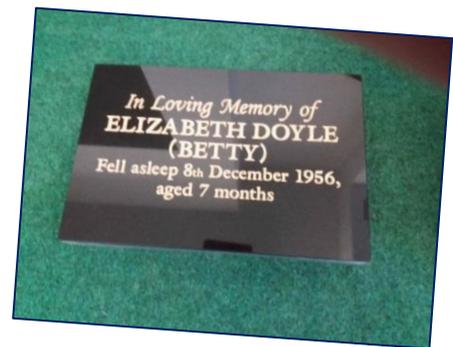
In early January 2019 I contacted local churches in the Kirkby area which was the address I had to go on. All of them came back with no record of Betty within their cemeteries or their records. However I did have a response from Rev. Jeremy from St Chads church who, although he couldn’t find Betty in their records, but did give me information and details of a charity called “Brief Lives – Remembered” who help bereaved families in our situation, especially from as early as 1940/50/60s, when things were dealt with so much differently. Many babies died from stillbirth or very young and were often taken away and parents never knew what became of them.

On 24th January 2019 I completed an enquiry form on the Brief Lives website and waited to hear; within 24 hours I received a call from Paula Jackson who explained to me how the process worked and that unfortunately due to many different factors some babies could not be found.

During the next 7 - 10 days I received many emails from Paula asking me various questions and keeping me updated with her search, after 10 days I began to lose hope of ever finding her.

7th February 2019

I received an email asking me to call Paula, which I did immediately, she had found Betty's resting place. The emotion was so overwhelming that after 63 years she was finally found! Paula had copies of the burial certificate with section and plot number, she also sent me maps to help locate it easily, being able to call my mother with the news that her baby sister had been found was amazing.



On 9th February I went to Liverpool to West Derby cemetery armed with my maps and within 30 minutes had located the exact spot.

After speaking with Liverpool City Council they agreed to let us lay a small flat stone to mark Betty's resting place.

18th April 2019

We held a memorial at the cemetery on the day that Betty would have been 63 years old, the Rev Jeremy who, at the start gave me the contact details for Brief Lives Remembered, came along to conduct a service. We had music, 'Fields of Gold' and 'Amazing Grace', family poems and prayers, thus giving Betty and her sisters the goodbye she deserved. I can't thank Paula enough for what she has made happen, she is an absolutely amazing lady who changes lives.

Many thanks also to my colleagues at Battlesbury Barracks raising funds to help support Paula at Brief lives on her search for other babies, together we raised £350, I'm sure it will go a long way in helping and I know it was gratefully received.