

Finding a Son and a Brother

Mum would often talk about 'her little boy' particularly around his birthday but quite often out of the blue. This little boy has always had a place in our hearts but since we have found him it is as though our family is now complete.

Darren was Mum and Dad's first child, born in 1971 at a time when babies who only lived for a short time were not given any dignity in death. As a young lady in her early 20s, following a long and difficult labour, Mum gave birth to her first son, Darren. Immediately after delivery, Darren was whisked away to a different hospital 25 miles away. My dad went with him. That was the only and last time they saw him.

As the years went by, they went on to have three girls who have all now grown up and given them a solid team of 8 grandchildren. Darren was never forgotten but there was never any positive way to remember him because things were different in the early 1970s. They did not have a photo of him. They did not have a print of his feet or hands. They did not know what happened to him. There was no funeral. There was no memorial. There was a void.

This chasm of heartache rippled through our lives. Mum would often talk about trying to find out what happened to him and where he was. Dad kept his thoughts and feelings to himself.

Then came the turning point in our lives. Whilst watching a soap which, at the time, featured a story line about still birth, Mum talked again about trying to find him. She talked about how amazing it is nowadays that babies who do not live long are given such respect and dignity and how the parents are supported in a way that she wished she had been all those years ago. This lack of dignity and respect continued to fill her with anger and sadness.



Only a week or so after this conversation I found "Brief Lives - Remembered". Within 24 hours Darren had been found. I had the information that parents had been craving for so many years and plentiful advice on how to share it. This was something I was so proud to do.

Mum and Dad now know that Darren was buried at Avonview Cemetery in Bristol on 26th October 1971. He was buried with another baby in an unmarked grave. Thanks to "Brief Lives - Remembered" I was able to give my parents the names of people and the cemetery and locally who could help locate the grave and provide the memorial he so deserved.

For us, our family is now complete. He is no longer "Mum's little boy", he is our brother and their son and now has the recognition he should have been honored with all those years ago. We will be eternally grateful to "Brief Lives - Remembered". Thank you.

Written by Kerry Brown

Darren Neil Smith - Born 15th September & Died 6th October 1971