

Michael

Michael was my brother. My twin brother. He was a still born baby. We were born in 1942, in the middle of World War II. The story goes that my Mum didn't know she was expecting twins. She became extremely ill the week leading up to our birth, two weeks premature. I was delivered, in a private nursing home and the doctor left afterwards. The nurse became worried and called him back and Michael was delivered, still born. I really have no recollection of this story ever being actually told to me, I just know it to be so. The story continues that Michael must have died in utero about a week before and that my Mum contracted toxæmia. I was never to have any more siblings.



Mum Ivy Emily Poole & me

In the years that have followed Michael has always been in my head and perhaps a part of my soul too. But not once did I question where he actually rested, why I now ask myself. The only solution is that he really is a part of me, perhaps two became one.

A few weeks ago I was watching an episode of the British drama 'Call the Midwife' set in the late 50's early 60's.

A woman gave birth to a still born child. The baby was quickly wrapped in a towel and taken away, she didn't even see her baby. The baby was placed on a draining board and all that was visible was a tiny foot. Another baby was born, this time a live twin, happiness was apparent but what happened to the first child?

It suddenly hit me that I had no idea where Michael was. Did my Mum and even perhaps my Dad get to hold him or even see him? In those days I very much doubt it. This episode stirred up a lot of emotions and I cried for my Mum and Dad, I have never lost a child but it must be devastating, to say the least.



I was talking to my daughter about this and she suggested that perhaps I should Google the question regarding still births in the 1940's. One of my granddaughters did this immediately and was rewarded with numerous answers. A few days later I decided to Google it also and found Brief Lives - Remembered. I emailed and received an

immediate reply from Paula. During the next few days/weeks, after a few false starts, Paula's persistence and my excitement, Michael's resting place has been found.

He was buried in a shared unmarked grave (it was evidently quite normal for still born babies to be buried with an adult) in a cemetery 6 days after we were born, on 16th March 1942. This date is ironic in a way as it's the same day my Mum died in 1963.

Now I know where he rests, has really I suppose ended a chapter, but not a book. He still lives on in my head and my soul and always will.

Brief Lives - Remembered has a beautiful website with a Memorial Wall where Michael has a special place. The March butterfly will take you there. My thanks to Paula, without you I would never have found Michael, although I feel he has never really been lost to me.

Ann

Michael Poole - Stillborn 10th March 1942