

Two mothers remember their experience:-

“There was no counselling available 35 years ago, when my daughter was stillborn. For three days afterwards I cried a lot. One of the attending staff told me that if I did not pull myself together, I would end up in their psychiatric unit, and it would be very hard to get out”. – Denise

“Pierce Matthew actually lived for six days. They did explain to my husband that his condition was serious and they didn’t expect him to live and I was not to see my baby. I remember from the beginning wanting desperately to see him and hold him. I wanted to know the colour of his hair etc. I loved him from the time I carried him. They should have let me say hello and goodbye properly. Nineteen years later I went back to the hospital and with the help of a kind nurse I saw Pierce Matthew’s Chart. I took some photos of it. The day I went to get Pierce Matthew’s birth and death certificate you would think I had won the lotto, it was wonderful holding these two certificates after all those years. I put all these mementos into a scrapbook on what would have been his nineteenth birthday. Not much perhaps, but each tiny memento means the world to me for the son I pray to in heaven” – Jean

ISANDS MEMORIES COLLECTION



8 Page/A4 size Booklets

Long Ago Bereaved Parents had so little to recognise the experience of their baby’s short lives or acknowledge their grief afterwards.

These beautiful 8 page, books offers Long Ago Bereaved Parents the opportunity to record details of their baby and create some memories. Each book represents a season of the year, for some parents this often evokes memories of the time when their baby was born.

No charge for single items. Available from-



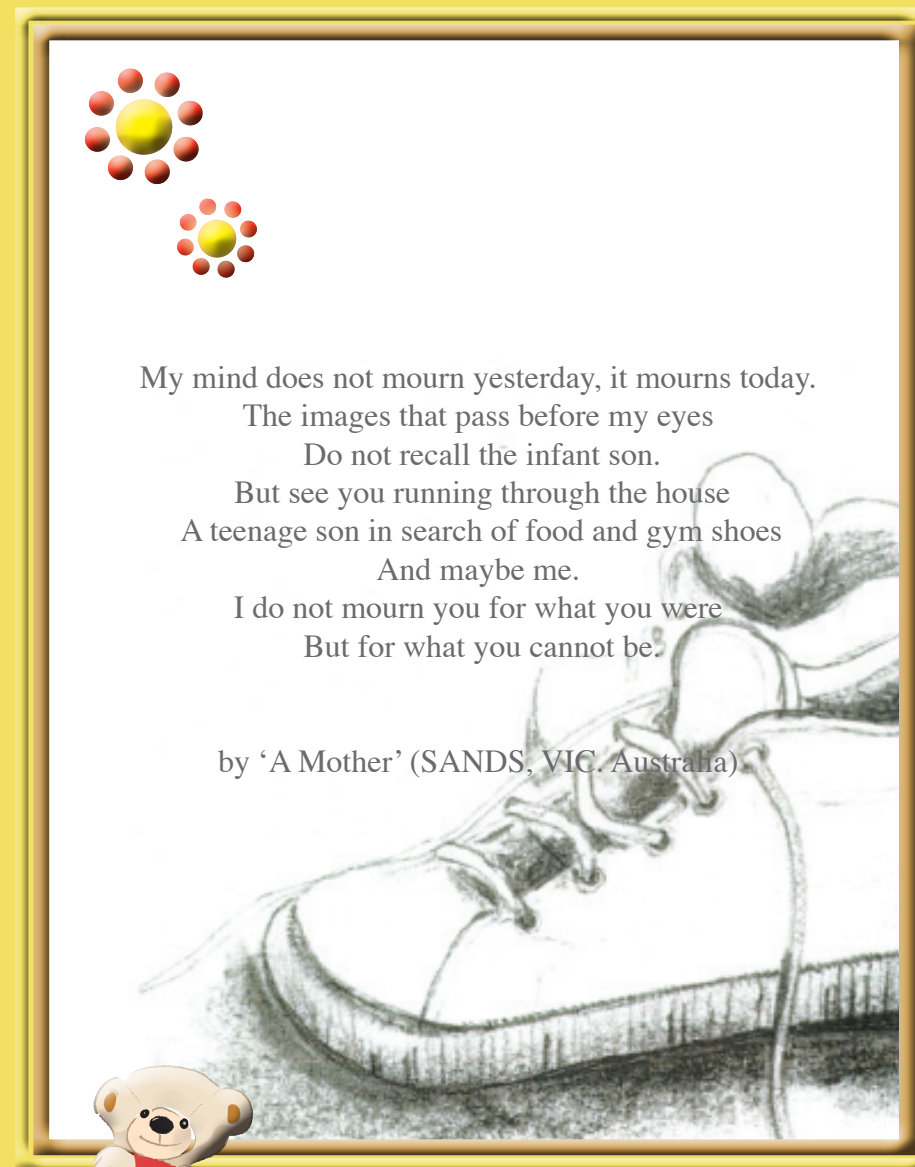
Carmichael House, 4 North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.

Telephone 01 872 6996 Website www.isands.ie Email info@isands.ie

ISANDS is a company limited by guarantee

Registered Charity Number – CHY 11507

Copyright ISANDS 2008
(Leaflet Long Ago Bereaved)

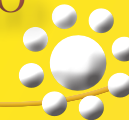


My mind does not mourn yesterday, it mourns today.
The images that pass before my eyes
Do not recall the infant son.
But see you running through the house
A teenage son in search of food and gym shoes
And maybe me.
I do not mourn you for what you were
But for what you cannot be.

by ‘A Mother’ (SANDS, VIC. Australia)



FOR PARENTS WHOSE BABIES
DIED A LONG TIME AGO



LITTLE UNDERSTANDING FOR PARENTS

For many years, parents were not supposed to grieve after the death of a baby and there was little understanding of the need to grieve.

Very often, parents did not see their babies – they were not allowed to hold or cuddle their baby. They were not given an opportunity to baptize their baby, arrange a funeral or burial and were told to go home and forget their loss as quickly as possible

IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO GRIEVE

Guilt and regret, relating to something you did or did not do, can play a large part in many parents experience of loss. Many Long Ago Bereaved Parents say “if only, I had asked or if only I insisted.” Remember it was all very different then and parents today going through similar experiences are encouraged and supported to create memories of their baby’s short lifetime. For you, having few or no tangible memories makes it even more difficult. Not allowing Baptism for a stillborn baby, ‘churching’, ‘limbo’ and many other church teachings and beliefs of the time added considerably to parent’s sadness and pain. Most of the churches teachings are now gone but the concerns and hurts remain.

If this was your experience, you may now feel there is a lot you would like to acknowledge about your baby and your loss and it is never too late to do that.

FINDING OUT ABOUT YOUR BABY

To find out more information about your baby contact the hospital where your baby was born. They should be able to tell you what sex your baby was (if you do not already know), if there was a reason for your babies’ death, and where he/she is buried. You may find it is difficult to trace your baby’s records or nursing homes may have closed down or medical practitioners may have died leaving no records. However, it is worth checking as most nursing homes passed on their records to a local hospital when they closed. Many hospitals now invite parents to talk over their past experience and the Social Worker will help to organise this.

If you are unsure of where your baby is buried, contact the hospital where your baby was born. Many babies were buried in “Holy Angels” communal plots. Many of the bigger cemeteries e.g. “Holy Angels” in Glasnevin, have accurate records of all babies buried there. Once you have the date of birth/death they can give you the exact location where your baby is buried. If the hospital where the birth took place is no longer in existence, ISANDS may be able to assist you to find out where the records are now.

MEMORIES

It may not be possible to trace your baby’s grave, but you could inscribe the baby’s name on your own family headstone, or just place flowers where you think your baby might be buried. You could sew a special patch with your baby’s name and date of birth and frame it or send it to ISANDS to place on the National Quilt, plant a tree or a shrub in memory of your baby, write down all you remember of that time or perhaps write a poem or a letter to your baby. It may take just one single action, one idea mentioned above to acknowledge your pain and sorrow.

ISANDS hold special Remembrance Services for babies who have died around the time of birth. We have Support Team Contacts throughout the country who are available for you to talk to.

ISANDS has a Book of Remembrance in which you can have your baby’s name recorded, contact ISANDS for details. Don’t worry if you didn’t give your baby a first name before now.

CERTIFICATES

If your baby lived, even for a few seconds, it should be possible for you to get a birth and death certificate if you haven’t already got them. If your baby was stillborn you would not have received a certificate. However, since the Stillbirth Registration Act 1994, you can get a stillbirth certificate for your baby once you have the relevant details. The Act applies only in relation to a child weighing 1lb 1.6ozs (500 grams) or more, or having a gestational age of 24 weeks or more, who shows no sign of life at birth. You can contact your local ISANDS group and seek some help. The hospital should be able to give you all the information you need in order to register the baby’s birth or death.

When contacting them you will need to provide them with the following information:- (1) Baby’s surname (2) Date of delivery or date of death if your baby lived for a short time (if you are unsure of exact dates, explain this to them) (3) Your present address and phone number (4) The address you were living at the time of your baby’s birth (5) Mother’s full name- including maiden name (6) Mother’s date of birth. You should register the baby in the Registration Office in the area where the baby was born. If you did not give the baby a name, there is an opportunity for you to do this now.

If you would like to speak to somebody who was bereaved long ago you can phone ISANDS or write to us, and we will put you in touch with a member of the Support Team.