

# Crowds sing along in funeral tribute to Joe

CROWDS sang along with entertainer Joe Longthorne as his voice rang out over his funeral cortege yesterday.

Hundreds in Joe's home city of Hull, East Yorkshire, lined the streets to pay their respects to the singer and impressionist.

He died aged 64 at his "adopted home" in Blackpool on August 3.

The entertainer's career spanned decades and included several performances at the Royal Variety Show.

He had only recently visited Hull to open the very funeral parlour

By **Hannah Robinson** and **Lucy Thornton**

where his body later rested. Mourners bowed their heads, and as the cortege, including violet-plumed horses, neared its finish a car could be heard playing Joe's version of Wind Beneath My Wings prompting crowds to join in.

The service was part of a three-day tribute to the star. He will be buried today in Blackpool, where he died at the home he shared with his husband Jamie. Joe was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2014.



Joe died of cancer, aged 64

By **James Murray**

**A**CTRESS Millie Kieve stands out among the Edinburgh Fringe crowd. At the age of 79, not only is she probably the oldest performer in a crowd made up of newcomers hoping to kickstart a career in comedy or impress festival-goers with their biting satire, she also has little interest in making people laugh. Because Millie has come out of retirement to take on the most challenging role of her career, reliving on stage the tragedy of her daughter's turbulent life and sudden death.

And the only ambition on her agenda is a powerful desire to tell people about the circumstances leading up to the loss of Karen at the age of 30.

Millie knows that her production is far from usual festival fare, but she is hoping audiences will be willing to understand and empathise.

"I hope audiences will appreciate what Karen and our family went through," she says.

Called Cruise to Hell, the show features Millie on stage beside a small table and a few pictures as she embarks on a personal journey of joy and sorrow in an absorbing, gripping 50-minute monologue.

It's so named because Millie's nightmare began with a holiday in 1985 when Karen was 20 and studying history at university. The family had gone on a Mediterranean cruise, which made its first stop at Palma, the capital of Majorca.

Millie and her husband Jeffrey were on board with Karen and two of their three sons, Daniel, then aged 10, and Paul, 17. The eldest son, Mark, was back in London holding the fort at the family's property management company.

The holiday started well and the family were enjoying the food, the sights and the cuisine on the luxury P&O liner.

But Karen was showing worrying signs that she was not reacting well to medication she had been given for a bad stomach.

After the boat sailed from Palma and she did not show up for dinner, they began to get concerned. Their search of the boat failed to find her. Anxious hours ticked on and concern turned to panic.

The cruise line put out a Tannoy message, asking passengers if they had seen someone resembling Karen, and a man came forward to say he'd seen her sitting in a cafe by the port of Palma shortly before the boat sailed. For some reason, she failed to return to the ship.

"It was a dreadful time for all of us," recalls Millie during a break from rehearsals at Edinburgh. "Everything was running through our minds, including the possibility that she had fallen overboard. For 12 long hours we had no idea where she was."

"There was a huge sense of relief when we learned she could have been in the cafe.

"At least someone had seen her and she appeared OK but we were in the middle of the Mediterranean and en route to Lisbon in Portugal so what could we do?"

"P&O were very good. They got someone to go to the cafe and thank



TRAGEDY: Smiling Karen Kieve not long before she died in 1995, aged 30

goodness Karen was still there even after all that time. She seemed absolutely fine and not distressed, but she was in another world. P&O arranged for her to be taken to a clinic in Majorca and my eldest son Mark flew out from London to see her there."

Karen told Mark that she felt rejected by Millie and didn't want to see her, so it was agreed that their brother Paul would fly from Lisbon to join Mark in Majorca.

However, Karen's mental state deteriorated and the family had to arrange for her to be heavily sedated and flown back to London in an air ambulance.

"It was a nightmare for the boys in Majorca but they did their very best for her," Millie recalls.

"I had noticed during the cruise she was getting very wound up, like a spring that was about to snap.

"She was feeling very sensitive that her mum didn't love her, which was certainly not the case. She was in a very bad way."

**K**AREN'S meltdown echoes the recent tragedy of Cambridge University student Alana Cutland, who appeared to suffer a mental crisis while on a Cessna light aircraft over Madagascar.

Despite attempts to restrain her by the pilot and another passenger, Alana opened the door to the plane and fell to her death. Her family believe she had an intense reaction to medication and had no intention of taking her life.

When Karen arrived back in London she was sent to a psychiatric clinic which marked the start of years of drug treatment and therapies.

Millie said: "One drug she was on was like a chemical cosh. Karen felt she was losing her personality. She was not well.

"I think of her life then and it felt like there was a big sledgehammer in the sky and sometimes it would hit her and sometimes it would miss her.

"For six years she was OK, normal, but she did have psychotic episodes. She travelled and did jobs and was

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