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'Glorious' Lucie laid to rest



Framed photo: Lucie pictured wearing her favourite dress

Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral of Lucie Blackman, who was abducted and killed while working as a bar hostess in Japan.

More than 200 family and friends of the 21-year-old former air stewardess, from Sevenoaks, Kent, arrived for the service at St Nicholas Parish Church in Chislehurst.

One of the many tokens of sympathy was a bouquet from Prime Minister Tony Blair, containing a handwritten message of support to the Blackman family.

Among the first to arrive were Lucie's father Tim Blackman - who made many visits to Japan appealing for information while his daughter was still missing - and his partner Jo Burr.

“
Lucie, a glorious girl who could quite literally light up a room”

Rev Chris Walker

Mr Blackman, a property developer, was followed minutes later by Lucie's brother Rupert, 17, and sister Sophie, 20.

Their mother, Jane Blackman, arrived five minutes before the start of the 1400BST service with other members of her family.

Burning incense

Inside the church a framed photo of Lucie, wearing her favourite dress, was placed on a

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table.

Mourners smelt burning incense sent by Japanese police investigating Lucie's murder and placed next to the photo.

A wreath from the Japanese ambassador to Britain lay on a nearby table and former heavyweight boxer Sir Henry Cooper, who lives in the village of Shipbourne, near Sevenoaks, was among the mourners.



Tim Blackman led appeals in Japan for his daughter

The funeral opened with live performances of pop songs Wind Beneath My Wings and I Will Always Love You.

'Glorious girl'

During the service, the Reverend Chris Walker read out a letter from a Japanese family whose daughter was murdered on a trip to Europe.

Mr Walker described Lucie as "a glorious girl who could quite literally light up a room with her presence".

He went on to praise her "vitality, sense of life and fun, her laughing face, her warm heart and concern for others".

"Through human sin and evil her life has been cut short, as have so many," he told mourners.

Mr Blackman and his children visited the cave where Lucie's remains were discovered in Japan, toasting her memory with champagne and laying a bouquet of her favourite flowers.

Lucie disappeared from Tokyo on 1 July last year after telling a friend she was going for a drive to the ocean with a male client.



Jane Blackman arrived with other family members

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She had been working as a bar hostess in the city's Roppongi entertainment district to fund a trip round Asia after giving up her airline job.

Police found her dismembered remains on 8 February this year in the cave on a beach at Miura, at the mouth of Tokyo Bay.

Murder investigation continues

The scene is near the seaside home of 48-year-old Japanese businessman Joji Obara, who is accused of having drugged and raped several women and remains the chief suspect in the Lucie Blackman murder case.

An inquest into Lucie's death was opened three days after her body was flown home on 6 March.

It was adjourned while the murder investigation continues in Japan.

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