

Family of toddler who died from rare liver disease attend funeral dressed as the cartoon characters that kept him so happy during his brave battle

By Rachel Rickard Straus

UPDATED: 16:16 GMT, 2 February 2012

Little Bailey Massey rocked with laughter when he watched his favourite cartoon characters on TV as he battled a rare liver disease.

Nine month old Bailey loved Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Fireman Sam, Bob the Builder along with Donald and Daisy Duck.

And when he died after three transplants failed, his family paid tribute to him by dressing as cartoon characters to escort the funeral cortege through the streets of his village to the local church.



Tragic: Bailey Massey died after three failed liver transplant attempts

His grandfather concrete worker Ian Taylor, wearing a Mickey Mouse costume, walked behind the chief mourner. His great uncles, Michael Duggan (Bob the Builder), 33, and Sean Duggan, 37 (Fireman Sam) along with family friends Jeanette Otterwell (Donald Duck) and Marie Chamberlain (Daisy Duck) flanked Bailey's hearse.

Walking behind was Ian's nephew Ross Taylor, 23, dressed as Minnie Mouse, followed by dozens of mourners as the cortege made the one mile journey through Bolton-on-Dearne, near Rotherham to the parish church.

Ian carried Bailey's wicker coffin into the church and back to the hearse before the boy was buried in the village cemetery.

Bailey was diagnosed with biliary atresia, caused by bile ducts in the liver not functioning, when he was seven weeks old and after several weeks in hospital and surgery his parents Simon and Lindsay were told their only child needed a liver transplant.

Simon, a painter and decorator, was told his liver matched his son's and the pair underwent surgery at Leeds General Infirmary on December 20th, but it was unsuccessful. Bailey had a second transplant on Boxing Day which failed due to blood complications.

A third donor liver became available in the south and it was rushed to Leeds by air ambulance but Bailey died during surgery.

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The family decided to do something special for his funeral and it was Lindsay, 24, who hit on the idea of a cartoon tribute to her son.

'He only had a short life and spent so much time in hospital,' said Lindsay, from Bolton-on-Dearne,

who gave up her job as a call centre worker when Bailey was born.

‘But he loved to watch cartoons and his favourite programme was the Mickey Mouse Club House. He used to rock with laughter when he watched them, they made him so happy.

‘We wanted to do something special and I thought it would be lovely if Bailey was surrounded by his favourite characters on his way to church. There were so many mourners and people in the street stopped, looked and paid their respects when we walked by.

‘The church was full and there were a lot of people outside. My dad carried him from the house to the hearse and then in and out of the church. It was a tribute to our son and everyone played their part. The funeral director said he had never done anything like it before.’

Bailey’s grandmother Kathryn Taylor said: ‘Bailey was a gorgeous baby and a delight to have. Since he died people have told us they have placed themselves on the donor list and that is the best news we can hear. All our family are on the list as well.

‘One of Bailey’s donors was in his sixties - age is not of importance in something like this which is one thing people don’t realise.

‘The doctors and nurses at Leeds were wonderful. They cried with us and they all hoped Bailey would survive. But to give babies, children and adults a chance of life people must sign up as donors.’

A spokesman for funeral directors Frank Hoyland said : ‘This was an unusual funeral but it was carried out just as the family wished. We were glad to help.’

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2095462/Disney-tribute-funeral-cartoon-loving-toddler-died-battle-rare-liver-disease.html>