



JENNA PARRY: Latest victim

# She was a happy girl ...so why kill herself?

By **Tony Bonnici**

A PRETTY teenager was yesterday named as the 17th youngster thought to have taken her own life in a town blighted by tragedy.

Jenna Parry, 16, is the latest victim in a wave of suicides that has reached epidemic proportions in Bridgend, South Wales.

Schoolgirl Jenna is the sixth young person to have killed herself since the start of this year.

And since the start of last year, 17 people in the area have killed themselves - 16 by hanging - while nine more in the surrounding valleys have also apparently committed suicide.

Last night Daniel John, 20, a friend of Jenna, said he could not imagine why she had taken her life and described her as "bubbly and carefree".

The latest tragedy comes less than five days after the deaths of Nathaniel Pritchard, 15, and his cousin Kelly Stephenson, 20.

## Giggling

Jenna was found hanging from a tree at a local beauty spot by a dog-walker early yesterday. Last night, in what has become an all too familiar ritual in the area, shocked family and friends began the search for answers.

It emerged that Jenna was the best friend of Jessica Jones, whose cousin Zachery Barnes, 17, was found hanged six months ago.

Jessica's mother Lisa, whose daughter had known Jenna for two years, described the latest tragedy as "so awful".

She said: "I saw her last night and she was laughing and giggling, without a care. That's the sort of person she was. She had everything to live for. I can't understand what is going on around here."

Mrs Jones added: "The girls took Zachery's death very hard. It is all very tragic and impossible to explain."

Like many of the other youngsters, Jenna had her own personal pages on social networking sites Bebo and Facebook.

Police are expected to examine her computer but sources say there is no immediate link between her death and controversial websites.

Mr John said: "Jenna loved butterflies and was very girly. She loved pop music and dance music."

"I last spoke her to yesterday and



Zachery Barnes, 17



Dale Crole, 18



Thomas Davies, 20



David Dilling, 19



DOUBLE DEATH: Liam Clarke, 20, and 17-year-old Natasha Randall were friends



Angie Fuller, 18, left



Luke Goodridge, 20



Jason Williams, 21



Kelly Stephenson, 20



Nathaniel Pritchard, 15



Gareth Morgan, 27



Leigh Jenkins, 22

she seemed normal - perfectly fine. I can't get my head around why she has done this."

Jenna's heartbroken parents Paul, 44, and Anne, 39, and her two brothers were still coming to terms with the tragedy.

Paul said: "We are all traumatised and are too upset to talk about it." Jenna's body was found by dog-

walker Michael Bennett in woodland known as the Snake Pit on Cefn Cribbwr common, less than half a mile from her home.

Security guard Mr Bennett, 61, said: "I feel shaken to the core. Why are youngsters around here doing this?"

The full Bridgend toll is Dale Crole, 18, David Dilling, 19, Thomas

Davies, 20, Zachery Barnes, 17, Gareth Morgan, 27, James Knight, 26, Jason Williams, 21, Andrew O'Neill, 19, Leigh Jenkins, 22, Liam Clarke, 20, Alan Price, 21, Luke Goodridge, 20, Natasha Randall, 17, Angie Fuller, 18, Kelly Stephenson, 20, and Nathaniel Pritchard, 15.

At a press conference yesterday, Nathaniel's mother Sharon said:

"The media reporting has made it unbearable. We feel coverage put an idea into our son's head and is glamorising ways of taking your own life."

"We never believed there was an internet pact and it certainly had nothing to do with living in Bridgend. It is a nice place to live."

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## Expert warns of internet link

AN EXPERT last night warned how the "suicide cluster" might be the result of teenagers imitating one another after contact on the internet.

While police have tried to play down connections between the 17 deaths, psychologist and novelist Lucy Beresford said: "What could be going on is that adolescents are sharing and describing experiences on the internet."

"People of this age tend to be very imitative. This is a period of enormous

change when young people start to form their own identities but are often insecure about these identities so they look to others.

"The thing about suicide among teenagers is that when things seem so uncertain, it is the fact that this is something that is so final."

"The experiences they describe are toxic, rather than in my day when you might be influenced by magazines like Smash Hits."

## Jenna belonged to 2 websites

JENNA Parry belonged to the social networking websites Bebo and Facebook.

They are mainly used by young people to communicate with each other, swap ideas, join groups and build up new friends - all via the internet.

Bebo, an acronym for "Blog early, blog often", was founded in 2005 by husband and wife Michael and Xochi Birch and has become one of the most popular sites in the UK.

It can be used in most countries around

the world and is continuing to grow. There is a new Polish version which uses a different database and there are plans to create similar ones in France and Germany.

Bebo is believed to be the third most popular social networking site but it only has a 1.18 per cent share of the market because there are so many.

The websites have sparked fears about young people's safety - particularly girls who post personal information and pictures on their pages.