

Hotel fire murderer is hunted

POLICE are treating last summer's hotel fire which killed three people in the early hours as murder, it was announced yesterday.

Officers believe the blaze, which tore through the building in minutes, was started deliberately on the ground floor.

The fire at the Penhalow Hotel in Newquay, Cornwall, claimed the lives of Joan Harper, 80, Peter Hughes, 43, and his mother Monica, 86.

Det Chief Supt Chris Boarland said: "This was a deliberate act."

Ms Harper's twin sister Marjorie Brys escaped the August 18 blaze. She said: "To learn that someone must answer a murder charge has added to an already heavy burden."

"I hope that the police will now bring to justice whoever is responsible for such a terrible act."

Sex bills hit 1/4 in debt hell

ONE in four debtors has money troubles from forking out for sex, according to a report.

Shelling out on porn chatlines, lap dancers, and prostitutes is the third most common reason for debt after booze and drugs and shopping.

The UK Insolvency Helpline said that 25 per cent of its 10,251 clients aged from 25 to 49 admitted spending on sex.

In all, 75 per cent were single men or separated women, average age 42.

Some had struggled to pay legal bills over sexual harassment or divorce.

Spokesman Richard Sorksy said: "We feel that as computer, satellite TV porn and prostitution becomes widespread it will give more men unrealistic expectations of their love lives and threaten relationships."

Bible nut tortured his sons

A RELIGIOUS fanatic was yesterday found guilty of wounding his sons by putting safety pins in their tongues and lips.

His two boys were told he hurt them because of what it said in the Bible, a court heard.

The obsessed dad would also slit their mouths with scalpel blades, a jury was told in a 10-week trial.

He was accused of pressing the tongue of one son with pliers and putting clothes pegs on the lips of both boys.

The court banned the family from being named for the children's sake.

The jury found the Nigerian dad, of Bradford, guilty of unlawful wounding and cruelty.

The boys' mother was convicted of cruelty by failing to protect them.

Jurors at Bradford crown court will today consider other charges.

SUICIDE TOWN

Parents' anguish as seven young friends all hang themselves in space of one year



DEATH WISH
Natasha was found
hanged at home

TROUBLED teenager Natasha Randall sent a chilling internet message to her friend Liam Clarke after he killed himself.

She wrote: "R.I.P Clarky boy!! gonna miss ya! always remember the gd times! love ya x - Me too!"

Three weeks later Natasha, 17, was also dead - the seventh victim of a bizarre suicide cult that haunts a small town.

She hanged herself at her home six days ago. And less than 24 hours later two of her pals, both girls aged 15, also tried to kill themselves.

One was on a life support machine last night after her family found her close to death. The other was recovering after slashing her wrists.

Now police are warning parents to keep watch on their children following the disturbing chain of young copycat deaths in Bridgend, South Wales, over the last year.

They fear teenagers may think it is "cool" to have an internet memorial site and are killing themselves to achieve hero worship among their pals.

Natasha is the only girl to have died. All the others were young men, including Liam, 20, who was found dead in a local park two days after Christmas.

Although some did not know each other, there are clear links between the victims. All were found hanged and many used the social networking internet site Bebo, where people set up their own web pages.

Natasha, a first year college student, spent hours every day on the internet using the name Wildchild.

Police have seized her computer to investigate possible connections and are visiting the parents of 20 of her friends.

Natasha's distraught step-mum Katrina said: "This has come as a terrible shock."

"We're too upset to speak about it - her dad especially."

Since the deaths, local youngsters have set up memorial sites

By RICHARD SMITH

where they can post messages and buy a "virtual brick" in a remembrance wall. The bricks on Natasha's site include messages saying: "RIP chick" "Sleep Tight Princess" and "Sweet dreams Angel."

Victim Liam was a friend of Thomas Davies, 20, who hanged himself in woods last February.

Thomas had bought himself a suit two days earlier for the funeral of pal David Dilling, 19, who died weeks after another mate Dale Crole, 18, was found hanged in a warehouse.

Police are also linking the death of Zachery Barnes, 17, with the spate of suicides. And two weeks ago Gareth Morgan, 27, was found hanged in his bedroom in Bridgend. Thomas's heart-

broken mum Melanie Davies, 38, said yesterday: "It's like a craze - a stupid sort of fad."

"They all seem to be copying each other by wanting to die. I knew Thomas was upset but I had no idea how much it was playing on his mind."

"He would spend about three hours a night on the

computer talking to his friends. He did go on Bebo and apparently he had a page there. He must have discussed his other friends dying on there because it had upset him."

"I'd warn other parents to keep a close eye on their children. "I wouldn't want any other mother to go through what I have."

David's mum Teresa Claypole, 43, said after her son's inquest: "Every time I hear that a young boy has hanged himself it brings it all back. My world just fell apart. I'm lost without him."

Zachery's mother Mandy, 38, said: "For him to take his perfect life is agonising. It's ripped my heart out. I can't accept he's not coming back."

Local MP Madeleine Moon said: "We need to get the message out to young people that there is always someone there for them to talk to."

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VIGIL: Bridgend is on suicide watch

SAD TOLL
THE most common cause of death for young males, suicide rates have risen by more than 50 per cent in the past 20 years.

Mystery of the lost generation



JANUARY, 2007
Dale Crole, 18, found hanged in warehouse



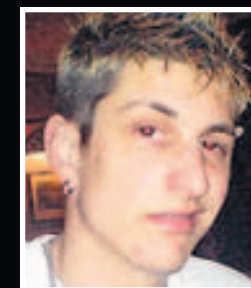
FEBRUARY, 2007
David Dilling, 19, found near home



FEBRUARY, 2007
Thomas Davies, 20, hanged from a tree



AUGUST, 2007
Zachery Barnes, 17, used washing line



DECEMBER, 2007
Liam Clarke, 20, found in park after Christmas



JANUARY, 2008
Gareth Morgan, 27, hanged in his bedroom