



TV soaps have helped highlight the problem of domestic violence. In this scene from *EastEnders*, Dr Trueman spots the bruises on Little Mo's face after she has been beaten by her husband, Trevor

...esterday, highlighted how almost 300 women in every 10,000 are subject to domestic violence in the south east each year.

That compares to 174 in London and 92 in the north of England.

And the level of abuse has been blamed as the reason why the violent crime figures are so high in our region.

Hugh Marriage, regional director for crime prevention in the south east, pledged to make tackling abuse in the home a priority.

He said he would be asking councils to make sure they had services in place to help victims of domestic abuse and make it a priority.

And he stressed different organisations would have to work closely with each other to clamp down on domestic violence.

Hospitals will have to treat the women and can report it, while schools may notice when children are affected by abuse

in the home. They also need to be proactive. The key to this is greater exchange of information.

'I don't have any idea why it should be so high. But I am determined to reduce it.'

Sally Jackson, Portsmouth's domestic violence project co-ordinator, said different agencies were already working together to try to put a stop to abuse and offer extra support for victims.

Bodies such as Victim Support and housing associations are building closer links to target the problem. And more

government money has become available to set up support services for victims.

She added: 'It's not just a police issue, it's something the whole community needs to deal with.'

'But because we are dealing with individuals we are still learning about how to deal with it.'

'The same things don't apply to everyone who suffers domestic abuse.'

A domestic violence group was launched earlier this year in Gosport while Havant police recently appointed a domestic violence co-ordinator.

Soaps help highlight the issue

TV SOAP operas are playing their part in making domestic violence a serious issue which needs to be addressed.

BBC 1's *EastEnders* recently focused on the character Little Mo - a woman caught in an abusive relationship.

And the focus was a good thing for raising the prominence of domestic violence, according to

Sally Jackson.

She said: 'It's actually helped. It has brought the issue out more and makes it easier for people to talk about it.'

'Previously domestic abuse has been very taboo.'

'I think in some cases it's shown people that there are people who will treat it seriously and with compassion.'

were destroyed by fire. Nearby gas cylinders escaped being caught up in the blaze when flames engulfed the bus and Renault car in a track off Mays Lane. Fire crews from Fareham and Gosport spent about an hour battling the blaze as smoke billowed through overhead power lines just after 4am today. Firefighters said the blaze was suspicious.

Good impression

HAMBLEDON: An outing to Petworth House to view the Turner exhibition is planned for next Saturday.

Hambledon Arts Society wants to take a party to view the work of the celebrated 19th century painter at Petworth in West Sussex.

Anyone interested should contact Amelia Cazalet on (023) 9263 2732.

Shoppers give cash

FAREHAM: A charity collection in the West Street shopping precinct raised £228 to help fund research by the Alzheimer's Association.

WHAT THEY SAID



'I am pleased to be back home. Thank you to everyone who helped search for me' - Donna Peterson, 15, of Southsea,

who was feared dead after going missing in Portsmouth.

Mum feared for children

A MOTHER feared for her children's lives as she made an emotional emergency phone call, a court has heard.

Esther Keet was watching television with her husband David and children David Digger, Esther Ellen and Ricky in their shed when bricks and ball-bearings were thrown through the window. The family heard male voices threatening to set light to the shed at Tynefield Caravan Park in Whiteley at 11pm on January 20.

Portsmouth Crown Court heard how Mrs Keet and her youngest son managed to escape to their adjacent caravan where she lay on the floor and pleaded for police to save her family.

voices of Danny Ray, Noah Kempster and Danny Ray Junior shouting threats.

Noah Kempster, 33, of Denzil Avenue, Netley Abbey and Danny Ray 42, of Osbourne Road, Warsash, pleaded not guilty to charges of arson with intent to endanger life and arson being reckless as to whether life is endangered. They also denied another charge of arson causing damage to a van and a charge of violent disorder.

Danny Ray Junior, 20, and James Kempster, 37, both of Tynefield Caravan Park and Luke Ray, 18, of Osbourne Road, Warsash, pleaded not guilty to a charge of violent disorder. (Proceeding)

Patient overdose ruled out

A MAN who fell unconscious after he was given a suspected drug overdose at a Gosport hospital says he will never go back.

But bosses overseeing Gosport War Memorial Hospital, where he was treated, have ruled out the possibility of a morphine overdose.

James Ripley was sent to the hospital in April 2000 for rest after he suffered a severe case of gout and bursitis, where his joints became red, inflamed and painful to the touch.

Shortly after he arrived at the hospital he was given morphine - a strong painkiller - and within days he had fallen unconscious. An

on-call doctor told anxious relatives Mr Ripley, now 78, had suffered a stroke and transferred him to Royal Hospital Haslar.

The following day, Mrs Paule Ripley was told by Haslar doctors her husband had not suffered a stroke but an analgesic overdose.

She complained to bosses of the then Portsmouth HealthCare NHS Trust, who ruled out the possibility of an overdose because Mr Ripley stopped receiving morphine two days before he fell unconscious.

But Max Millett, chief executive of the former trust, said the complaint had highlighted issues that needed action.

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