

# EADT24

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## Sudbury: Jehovah's Witness jailed for "catalogue" of sexual offences

✉ Jane Hunt [mailto:jane.hunt@eadt.co.uk] Friday, January 27, 2012  
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A JEHOVAH'S Witness has been jailed for three and a half years for "a catalogue" of sexual offences on two schoolgirls more than 15 years ago.

Sentencing 40-year-old Paul Wood, formerly of Sudbury, Judge David Goodin said that not surprisingly the impact of the offences on his two victims was still affecting them.

During a trial last year Ipswich Crown Court heard that Wood had indecently touched the girls' breasts while play-fighting with them.

One of the victims also claimed that further incidents had taken place in Wood's car when he had got her to touch him indecently over his clothing and had touched her over her clothing

The same victim also claimed that Wood had touched her intimately on one occasion under her clothing and said he had bought her underwear he wanted her to wear.

The court heard that Wood had asked the other victim to put on his wife's underwear after saying she no longer wore it.

The victims made allegations to the police after hearing in 2009 that Wood was taking up a role with Jehovah's Witnesses in another part of the country that would have brought him into contact with young women.

The court heard that in 2000 the victims told Jehovah's Witness elders in west Suffolk about what Wood had allegedly done to them but it was left to the girls to decide if they wanted to go to the police.

Andrew Thompson, prosecuting, said that as the girls did not want to go to the police nothing was done then.

Wood, who now lives in Derbyshire, was found guilty by majority verdicts of 10-2 of nine offences of indecent assault on two schoolgirls when they were aged between eight and 15. He was found not guilty of raping a third alleged victim, aged 17.

Wood denied a total of 17 offences of indecent assault, three offences of rape and one of attempted rape.

After returning guilty verdicts on the nine offences of indecent assault and a not-guilty verdict on one rape charge, the jury was discharged from returning verdicts on the remaining charges.

At yesterday's sentencing hearing Mr Thompson offered no evidence on those charges and Judge Goodin directed not-guilty verdicts should be entered on the court record.

Wood was ordered to sign the sex offenders' register indefinitely and was made the subject of a sexual offences prevention order restricting his future contact with children under 18.

Steven Dyble, for Wood, said his client had not had any previous convictions for sexual offences and had not committed any further offences in the last 14 years.

He said Wood was aged between 20 and 26 at the time of the offences and claimed he had been wrongly convicted.

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