

Man convicted of historic sex crimes on fellow pupils at Royal Blind School



A man has been convicted of a series of rapes and serious sexual assaults carried out when he was a schoolboy in Edinburgh.

David Penman had denied the attacks on fellow pupils at the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh in the 1980s and 1990s but was convicted by a jury following a trial at the High Court in Edinburgh.

The 42-year-old attended the school between 1986 and 1991. During that time he sexually assaulted numerous other students, male and female, all of whom were blind or partially sighted as he is.

In September 2013 one of Penman's victims disclosed that he had raped her, and a police investigation was started. As it progressed further victims came forward to report the abuse they had suffered, and in February 2015 Penman was charged with 17 offences of rape, indecent assault and breach of the peace.

Detective Inspector Kevin Harkins of Edinburgh's Divisional Rape Investigation Unit said:

"This is an extremely unusual and disturbing case where a boy began committing the most serious sexual crimes against numerous classmates at the age of just 12. Penman's victims were amongst the most vulnerable young people and he left them too scared to speak up about what he was subjecting them to.

"His offences took place around the school grounds and our

investigation built up a picture of a devious sexual predator, who took particular care not to be caught by staff.

“I commend the bravery of all of his victims who not only came forward and made the difficult disclosure of what they had suffered, but had to then relive these awful experiences in court when Penman failed to take responsibility for his actions and denied all the charges. I hope that his conviction brings them some comfort.

“Penman began his campaign of sexual offending back in 1986 and 31 years later he will be facing prison for his crimes. No matter how long ago a sexual offence happened, my team and our public protection colleagues across Scotland will always listen, support, and carry out a thorough investigation to bring predators like Penman to justice.”