

Karate player cleared of abuse

A KARATE enthusiast has walked free after being unanimously cleared of allegations of abusing a young girl.

Stephen Wood, aged 28, of Woodcote Walk, Fishponds, was unanimously cleared of six allegations of indecent assault.

The jury also unanimously cleared him of one allegation of attempted rape and an alternative charge of indecent assault.

Prosecutor Andrew Macfarlane said the girl made the allegations after watching an NSPCC TV advertisement showing an Action Man crying. It encouraged children to talk about abuse.

The court was told the girl, now aged 13, and her younger brother had occasionally been in the care of Mr Wood and his then partner.

Mr Wood categorically denied ever committing any sexual offence.

He agreed he had sat between the girl and her brother on a bed. But he said this was to stop them from quarrelling over a computer game.

When first approached by the police and told of the girl's allegations Mr Wood replied: "I haven't done this."

In evidence, Mr Wood said when he was playing in a rough and tumble way with the children his partner could have walked in at any time.

He denied he had ever gone into the children's bedroom without being fully clothed.