

Rosie Swale and friend 'plotted to poison man'

Round-the-world sailor Rosie Swale, aged 31, and her friend, who had undergone a sex-change operation, Tracey Stamp, aged 45, poisoned Tracey's boyfriend to keep him out of the way. Winchester Crown Court heard yesterday.

They dosed 36-year-old Southampton doctor Keith Vincent with cytisine which they extracted from laburnum seeds, the jury was told. He had been Miss Stamp's live-in boyfriend for 14 years, it was alleged.

After the poison plot the two women tried to get Mr Vincent gaoled by pretending he had defied a High Court order not to interfere or molest Miss Stamp by sending her a wreath and a message reading: "To my dear wife, from Keith."

In fact the wreath had been sent by the two women, said Mr Roger Titheridge.

The alleged poison plot was

hatched when Miss Stamp, formerly a merchant seaman, became friends with Mrs Swale, who eventually left her husband, Colin, and her two young children to live with the sex-change woman in 1978, the jury heard.

Earlier in 1978, Mr Vincent was racked with intense stomach pains, Mr Titheridge said. He had suffered similar attacks since 1970. He went to hospital when the two women left Southampton for Blyth Wood, Farley Heath, Nr Guildford.

"The pains were not caused by illness, but by poisoning with cytisine," Mr Titheridge said. "This poison was administered not to kill him or cause really serious injury, but to keep him out of the way."

Both women deny administering cytisine to Mr Vincent. The case continues.



ACCUSED: Round the world yachtswoman Rosie Swale, right, and her sex-change friend Tracey Stamp.

Rosie Swale found guilty of poisoning and given suspended gaol sentence

Round-the-world yachtswoman Rosie Swale was given a nine-month suspended prison sentence yesterday after being found guilty of poisoning a former boy friend of her sex-change companion, Tracey Stamp.

The jury at Winchester Crown Court was unable to reach a verdict on the same charge against Miss Stamp, aged 45. Mr Justice Michael Davies discharged the jury from giving a verdict and said that the prosecution would want to consider the position.

There could well be a retrial, he said, and nothing should be printed or published which might prejudice or interfere with a retrial.

Miss Swale, aged 31, and Miss Stamp were conditionally discharged for 12 months after being found guilty of perjury and attempting to pervert the course of justice.

The prosecution had alleged that Miss Stamp's former boyfriend, Keith Vincent, was given cytisine, which comes from the laburnum tree. It

The Guardian 24th FEB.

was meant not to kill him, but to make him ill and "keep him out of the way."

After yesterday's verdict Miss Swale made a statement from the dock which the judge asked should not be published.

The judge said he thought that any publication of her remarks were not to be conducive to any further trial of Miss Stamp and could have grave effects.

The prosecution had alleged that Mr Vincent, a former stevedore, was given the poison in a pepper pot and in gravy. Miss Swale, it was said, gave him the poison in a glass of milk.

The judge told Miss Swale that administering poison must be regarded as a serious offence which would normally warrant a prison sentence. But if ever there was a case which warranted a suspended sentence, it was hers, he said.

The jury was told that Mr Vincent had suffered from severe stomach pains and vomiting. Medical examination showed no cause, but the reason, said the prosecution, was that he was being given the poison.

Both of the accused at first denied everything to the police. Miss Stamp admitted that she knew how to prepare the poison, it was alleged, because she was a witch and her grandmother had told her. Miss Swale later said that she alone had poisoned Mr Vincent and sent Miss Stamp a wreath as if it had come from him.

The prosecution said that this was not true and claimed that Miss Swale had made the confession to shield and protect her friend. The prosecution said that the two issued a High Court writ complaining that Mr Vincent was pestering them. He undertook not to do so, and they then arranged for a wreath to be sent to Miss Stamp as if it had come from Mr Vincent with the object of getting him sent to prison.