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Croydon circumcision campaigner caught with child porn videos



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Saturday, April 21, 2012

THE head of a pro-circumcision group who used to run a children's computer club was caught with a hoard of child porn.

Vernon Quaintance, from Upper Norwood, has avoided a jail term – despite having three video cassettes with nine-hours' worth of clips showing boys as young as 11 engaging in sex acts.



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Vernon Quaintance admitted three counts of possession of indecent photographs of a child

The 68-year-old is the head of the Gilgal Society, a group dedicated to promoting male circumcision.

The Old Bailey heard how police raided Quaintance's home in Henley Gardens, Upper Norwood, on April 11 last year after receiving a tip-off.

The movies seized included graphic footage of child abuse ranked at the second-highest level of severity.

Prosecuting, Frances Janusz said: "Of the five tapes seized, three were found to contain indecent images. They comprise a total of seven to nine hours.

"The children were estimated to be between 11 and 16 years old."

Robert Girling, defending, said the video tapes had been found in a box in Quaintance's office and featured films from the late 70s and early 80s.

Mr Girling told the court: "He accepts that he acquired it and it was material that he looked at the time. But 'at the time' is approaching 40 years ago.



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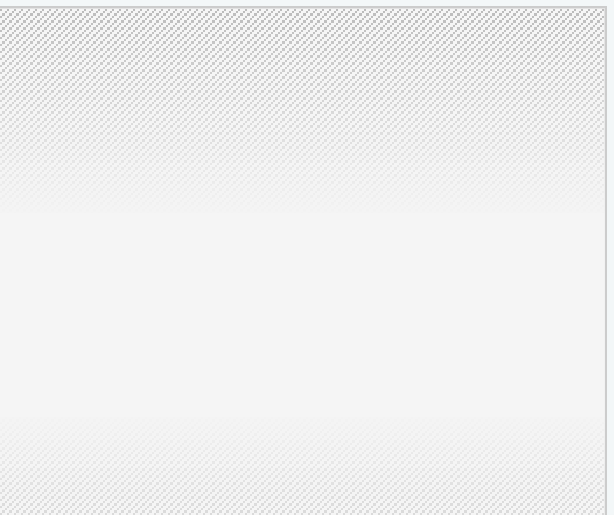
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"It was recovered from a box in his office and it was a box that he had not looked into for years and years."

Quaintance, who the court was told had been celibate for his entire life, admitted three counts of possession of indecent photographs of a child.

The retired telephone engineer was handed a 40-week jail term, suspended for two years, ordered to complete a sexual offenders rehabilitation course, and told to pay £300 costs.

According to an online profile, Quaintance is a former chairman of Croydon Computer Club, who also started a free computer group for children.

Sentencing him on Tuesday, judge Nicholas-Lorraine Smith told him: "You said you had watched the videos but claimed to have got no sexual enjoyments.

"I'm afraid I very much doubt that since you retained them."

But he said Quaintance's willingness to address his problems meant he could suspend his prison sentence.

Residents in Henley Gardens, where Quaintance is known as the respected head of the local community association, were shocked to hear of his conviction. One neighbour, who did not want to be named, said: "I know he is a very religious man and is committed to the church."



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