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A man who battered a pensioner to death after an argument at a bus stop was today found guilty of manslaughter and jailed for six years.

Alec Pearn left Peter Seaman dying in a gutter after he attacked him with a piece of wood.

The 21-year-old labourer, from Looe, Cornwall was sitting at a bus stop in the small village of Dobwalls on August 7 last year with his feet stretched across the pavement.

Truro Crown Court was told when Mr Seaman walked passed and told him to move the pair argued before Pearn crossed the road to pick up a weapon and clubbed the 66-year-old to death, causing his skull to "cave in".

Pearn was waiting for his father Andrew, an off-duty paramedic who arrived after his son had fled the scene and tried in vain to save the life of Mr Seaman.

Pearn was acquitted of murder.

Judge Graham Cottle said he had repeatedly lied about the incident since his arrest and had "needlessly taken a life".

He said Pearn's claim that he was acting in self defence was "fanciful" and any suggestion that

he was physically threatened by a pensioner who had numerous health problems was "a ridiculous proposition".

Judge Cottle said: "You could at any stage have just walked away.

"You crossed the road and picked up a substantial piece of wood.

"You returned with that piece of wood and began to club the deceased with it.

"You landed at least one blow to the head, to all intents and purposes that killed him there and then."

The court heard that Mr Seaman was taken to hospital but died the following day.

Peter Blair QC, prosecuting, said Mr Seaman had taken his dog for an afternoon walk when the altercation started.

During the row Pearn's bag was thrown over a hedge and he then crossed the road to pick up the wood.

Mr Blair said he struck Mr Seaman a number of times, finally swinging the weapon at his head, fracturing his skull.

He said: "It was an altercation Alec Pearn refused to back down from.

"He totally lost his temper.

"These were not soft blows, this was a full on attack.

"Alec Pearn did not stop, he raised this weapon up and he brought it down hard on Mr Seaman's skull.

"It caved in, the consequences were fatal."

The court heard that when interviewed by police Pearn said Mr Seaman had "nearly swung for him" and he was acting in self defence.

Mr Seaman, a retired heating engineer from Dobwalls, was married to Christine and they had two sons - Paul and Kevin - and grandchildren Joanna, aged eight, and Billy, four.

He was blind in one eye, suffered asthma and had undergone a knee operation weeks before the attack.

In mitigation Geoffrey Mercer QC, defending, said Pearn was not looking for trouble that day and had not been carrying a weapon with him.

He said character references described Pearn as a "thoroughly decent, hard working young man".