

Husband, 95, spared jail for mercy killing attempt on wife

By Leon Watson

A 95-YEAR-OLD man who tried to murder his wife with a lump hammer in a mercy killing has been spared jail after a judge said their relationship was grounded in "true love".

Denver Beddows attacked wife Olive, 88, at their home in Warrington, Cheshire, after she begged him to take her life because she did not want to die in a care home or hospital.

Mrs Beddows suffered multiple skull fractures and lacerations but is making "a good recovery" in hospital.

Liverpool Crown Court heard that the couple's marriage had been "perfect and happy" but Mrs Beddows had developed physical and mental health problems after she was involved in a car accident about nine months before the attack on Feb 4.

The couple's son had found his parents sitting on the bathroom floor with "blood everywhere", the court heard.

Later, Beddows told a police officer that his wife was "going mad" and went on to say: "Why did she not die? Don't

Denver Beddows
attacked his wife of
65 years, Olive, with
a hammer after she
pleaded with him to
end her life



try to bring her back." He added: "I have made a mess of it and now she is still suffering ... Why didn't she die? She is the most beautiful woman in the world and I have made it worse. I would happily be a murderer." He pleaded guilty to attempted murder.

Philip Tully, mitigating, said Beddows, who had no previous convictions, had only carried out his attack "following repeated requests at a time when he was in a state of exhaustion and despair in relation to his wife's wellbeing".

Sentencing the pensioner - who had been in custody since the incident - the Recorder of Liverpool, Judge Clement Goldstone QC, told Beddows that his two-year jail term would be suspended, so as not to "prolong your agony".

Judge Goldstone noted that his wife had forgiven Beddows and that she wished to be reunited with him.

He said: "That is indeed true love, no doubt earned by you over 65 years of devoted and loyal, loving married life, described by you as perfect and happy.

"Although this was a terrible crime, the blame which attaches to you for what you did is far outweighed by the tragedy of the situation and the circumstances in which you found yourself."