DETECTIVES have called off a rape hunt after a woman who claimed she had been subjected to a terrifying sexual assault in an Ipswich churchyard told police the attack never happened.

The double-rape was alleged to have taken place in the grounds of St Margaret's Parish Church, St Margaret's Plain, as the 36-year-old woman walked home on Tuesday night.

Police launched a major manhunt for the alleged rapists and fears were raised in the area which was just yards from Cobbold Street – scene of the rape of a 92-year-old last March.

The search for Tuesday's attackers was called off yesterday after the alleged victim withdrew her complaint and admitted to officers that it never took place at all.

Officers would be helping the woman to get any medical help she might need in the future, a police spokeswoman said.

"An Ipswich woman who told police she had been raped by two men on Tuesday night has stated that the attack did not take place," she said.

"Officers are now working with the appropriate organisations to see she receives ongoing support and care."

In the wake of the retracted rape claim, police today sought to reassure the public about the safety of Suffolk's streets and thank all those who had offered information to help detectives.
"We would like to remind people that stranger rape is a rare crime. People can feel safe when out and about in the county though sensible precautions should always be taken," the police spokeswoman said. Leaflets on personal safety in the county are available from police stations, she added.

The withdrawal of Tuesday's complaint is the third time in less than a year that police in the Ipswich area have been forced to call off a major inquiry after the alleged victim of a stranger rape admitted her claim was false.

Last July, detectives called off the search for a sex attacker in Bramford after the 17-year-old alleged victim withdrew her claim that she had been raped after getting off a bus.

And in March, 2001, a 16-year-old who claimed she had been raped at Ipswich docks on her way home from a night out, also withdrew her complaint.

The false claims have come as detectives continue their search for a man who raped an Essex teenager in Stone Lodge Lane last July and for the rapist who dragged a frail Suffolk pensioner off Cobbold Street last March and subjected her to a terrifying assault.

https://www.ipswichstar.co.uk/news/police-end-rape-hunt-1-124129