

Shoulder & Elbow



Centre

Reading Shoulder Unit



www.readingshoulderunit.com

My name is Michael Heffernan and, at the time, I was 41 years old with a wife who has Multiple Sclerosis and a baby daughter aged only 10 months.

It all started in July 1990; I was coming home from work and a pain started in the right side of my neck. During the evening, the pain increased substantially and spread to my right shoulder which began to stiffen. When I woke up the next morning it was the same - still very stiff - but I went to work regardless.

Before I went to work however, I asked my wife to telephone our GP to make a late appointment. I only stayed at work for half a day because of the severity of the pain.

I went home and arranged an emergency appointment to see my GP straightaway. When he examined me he said it looked like a frozen shoulder. He sent me for an X-ray but nothing was found (E.g. nothing broken or chipped). I went back to my GP the same day whereupon he confirmed it was a frozen shoulder and he said all he could do was inject it with steroids which he did, but it only worked for about two hours. The pain became worse then before the injection, so I took the painkillers given to me by my GP, but they done nothing to help.

After 3 - 4 days I went back to my GP and he gave me another injection in my shoulder but again it had no effect; he told me to continue taking the painkillers. Also, he made an appointment for me to see a specialist at Hillingdon Hospital and told me to go to the Physiotherapy department there. I went home, but during the night I woke up in a cold sweat and was shivering. I told my GP the next day and he told me it was not related to my shoulder.

I received a letter back from the hospital saying that I had to wait 10 weeks for an appointment to see a specialist.

I started physiotherapy and attended most days of the week. This carried on for 10 weeks, but symptoms got worse and the pain was so unbearable that I could not sleep at night, I could not lie down in bed and I had to sit up in an armchair all night.

During the 10 weeks my physiotherapist tried everything. She asked a colleague who specialises in pain relief by TNS to help, but nothing helped with the pain. They were both very concerned, causing them to ask the specialist if there was absolutely any possibility that I could see him any sooner than my appointment on the 3rd October but all he kept saying was that he was too busy. I also asked my GP, he said he had already asked for an urgent appointment and that's all he could do.

On the 3rd October, I saw the specialist Doctor and he said all he could do was to give me a massive injection in my shoulder but he would have to send me for another X-ray first. I was X-rayed immediately and I took the X-ray back to the specialist. He said the X-ray revealed an infected shoulder causing the intense pain. He blamed my GP for doing the injection incorrectly.

The specialist took me for an Ultrasound scan which revealed that my shoulder had an infection growing inside it, eating away the gristle. I was then taken to see a Consultant Orthopaedic Specialist who examined me and said an exploratory operation had to be done immediately so that a sample of the fluid in my shoulder could be sent for tests. They found that the fluid grew an organism known as Staphococcus Aureus; as a result of this the Consultant Orthopaedic Specialist prescribed Intravenous Antibiotics. I was also admitted into hospital.

On October 8th, I had my shoulder cut open. The joint was cleaned out and a drainage tube was put in which linked to a bottle for the infection to drain out. I was discharged from the hospital on October 12th.

I was still in a lot of pain and the Consultant said because of the damage in the joint I may not be able to get the full use of my shoulder back ever again. He also said that the joint was not strong enough for another painful operation, at that time, because he was afraid of breaking the shoulder. I stayed on painkillers until I saw Mr Copeland at Royal Berkshire Hospital in December 1991. He started to do an exploratory operation but soon discovered that my shoulder was in such a mess due to the infection and he thought it would better to do a total replacement shoulder (Copeland Shoulder).

It was painful when I woke up from the operation but the nurse gave me Morphine which soon cured that. I stayed in hospital for a week or so with my arm and shoulder heavily strapped up and this is how I went home from hospital. I was still in pain but not as much as before the operation. I had physiotherapy for a while and got some movement back but stayed on painkillers.

I was able to go back to work after some time where I worked for myself.

The Copeland Shoulder survived until 2007 with one minor operation in that time to clean up something inside. Mr Copeland performed a brilliant job. Thank you.



In December 2006, I saw Mr Levy who sent me for an X-ray on my right shoulder he showed me the X-ray and showed to me the wear and tear on my old shoulder replacement and suggested that I should consider having one of his shoulder replacements done (known as a Verso Shoulder Replacement). I asked for time to think and consulted my wife who was with me, I also asked some of his colleagues in the clinic at that time, but to my surprise they were all very cautious, but nevertheless agreed to have the

operation by Mr Levy.

In April 2007, I had the Verso Shoulder Replacement operation performed by Mr Levy. I woke up from the operation and had very little pain in my right elbow. There was Morphine on drip for me to use when required but I didn't need it at all. I was in hospital for five days; I got movement in

my shoulder almost immediately. I went for physiotherapy and they could not believe the amount of movement and lack of pain I had in my shoulder so soon after such an operation.



I went for a private HGV and PCV medical about 6 weeks after the operation, as it was due, so that I could renew my licence. The Doctor, an Orthopaedic surgeon himself, asked me all about the operation. He could not believe how much movement and strength I had in my shoulder. I passed the medical with flying colours.

I now do things that I have not done in years. Since the operation, I have been able cut a hole in the back brick wall of my garage and installed an up-and-over door. I have also laid concrete ramps, put up a new 100 foot panel fence for my neighbour and I can now do simple things like changing a light bulb in the ceiling which I could not do before the operation.

I now have practically full range of movement and have

for quite a while with no pain. I wish I could have had this Verso shoulder back in 1991, I would have then returned to my highly paid job as a senior mobile crane operator and adviser.

I am now 59 and work as a full time carer looking after my wife who has MS.

I would like to recommend this Verso shoulder replacement to anyone considering having it done and I would like to thank Mr Levy for the brilliant job he has done on my shoulder, it has changed my life. Thank you.

Michael Heffernan.

