

Jim Newman

'Flying High after transformative Eye Surgery at LaserSight Essex'



Private pilot Jim Newman is flying high after revolutionary eye surgery that has transformed his failing eyesight. Jim has a whole new outlook on life — especially from thousands of feet up — after becoming one of the first people in Essex to undergo a pioneering eye operation. Surgeons using state-of-the-art technology have inserted “amazing” new lenses into his eyes making it possible for Jim to ditch his glasses after 25 years. The company director of Marine Parade, Leigh-on-Sea, enjoys an active lifestyle and is delighted with the results. Jim (60), who flies a Piper Warrior 151 light aircraft, went to war on his deteriorating sight after his annual medical for his pilot’s licence revealed he had cataracts. He says: “I have to have a medical every year to keep my pilot’s licence and in December the medical showed that cataracts had started to develop in both eyes. I was referred to LaserSight where

the surgeon talked me through the options.” Consultant ophthalmologists at the Phoenix Hospital offer patients the opportunity to have a revolutionary new lens inserted into their eye that cures both cataracts and many other conditions that were previously unsuitable for techniques such as laser eye surgery. They use the pioneering AcrySof® ReSTOR® lens developed by world-leading eye company Alcon which has the potential to revolutionise the treatment of cataracts. Unlike other lenses the ReSTOR allows patients to see both distance and close-up and in most cases they no longer need their glasses. Jim says: “After 25 years of having to wear glasses all the time it is marvellous not to need them anymore. That is what appealed to me about this lens. It makes things so much easier for flying. I had varifocals and constantly had to look through different parts of my glasses to see into the distance and then look down at the instrument panel. Now it is incredible. There is a lot of instrumentation to look at when you are flying a plane and I can just look down and immediately focus. It is marvellous technology. “I had private health care which covered the cost of my cataract treatment but I paid extra to upgrade to these lenses. I would recommend them to

anybody.” Jim, who has been flying for eight years, shares the Piper Warrior with a colleague. He regularly heads for the continent in the four-seater plane from Southend. There are also other benefits from the revolutionary operation. Jim says: “I always loved diving but decided to give it up four or five years ago. As my sight deteriorated I couldn’t read the computer on my arm and although you can get a prescription lens put into your dive goggles they are quite crude and didn’t really work. I discussed it with my surgeon and asked him if he thought I would be able to go diving again and he said ‘no problem, you’ve got your sight back and if you go back this summer when your eyes are fully healed and try a few dives you’ll be fine’. I am looking forward to that.” The lenses have also made Jim’s peripheral vision much better. He says: “I have always been a confident driver but when I was reversing while wearing my varifocal glasses I found there were blind spots and I had to turn my head to see. My vision is much better now. I am a lot more comfortable judging distances through a narrow gap.” Jim had his first eye treated in December and the second in January and describes the operation as “a breeze”. He says: “The discomfort you go through really is quite minimal – especially when you see the results. Obviously when I had the first eye done I was apprehensive. I was still awake and could see what was going on but it was the best Christmas present I could ever have given myself. The second operation was easy. You know afterwards that you have been prodded about and your eyes feel a little bit gritty but the discomfort soon goes.” Each operation took just 15 minutes and Jim was given drops to anaesthetise the eye. Jim’s surgeon explains: “During the operation a micro-incision is made at the edge of the cornea. A tiny probe is inserted into the eye and the existing lens is gently broken down by ultrasound and removed. The ReSTOR lens is then folded and inserted through the tiny incision. Once in place the lens unfolds into the correct position. As the incision is so small, stitches are rarely required. Patients can then return home the same day and look forward to a rapid and pain-free recovery.” And according to Jim: “My eyes are getting better and better all the time.” home the same day and look forward to a rapid and pain-free recovery.” And according to Jim: “My eyes are getting better and better all the time.”