

**He's taken a Turn-er for better**

# OPERATION MAKES NEW MAN OF DES

by James Morrison

**BRIGHTON** Kemp Town MP Des Turner has a new lease of life.

Two months ago, the veteran Labour politician was barely able to carry his briefcase or House of Commons papers without feeling a sharp pain in his pelvis.

And at times, even walking upstairs or sitting down sharply left him clutching his side and gritting his teeth.

Now, after years of discomfort, the 55-year-old is a new man, thanks to a revolutionary operation to resurface his right hip.

Since the Fifties, surgeons have seen resurfacing, rather than replacing, hips as the preferred option for younger people with pelvic problems.

While artificial hips are considered fine for older patients, they are deemed too inflexible and susceptible to wear and tear for the more active.

And as fitting one can damage surrounding bone, recent research suggests they sometimes contribute to the arthritis they set out to cure.

Des, who first started suffering from hip problems four years ago, says: "I used to fence a lot and run long distance to keep fit, sometimes doing up to 11 miles at a stretch, but I had to stop when the pain just got too bad, and I ended up just breaking down.



**ON MEND: Des Turner**

"During last year's election campaign, it got quite painful at times, so I was hobbling rather than running around, but luckily it never got to that very bad stage, when you're virtually immobile.

"But since then, there have been a couple of times when the pain's been so bad I haven't been able to make the division lobbies in Parliament, so it's been lucky we've had such a good majority that the vote hasn't been on a knife-edge."

He adds that a frustrating side-effect was the amount of weight he ended up putting on - at one time rising from less than 12 stones to more than 14 stones.

Des was operated on at Birmingham Royal Orthopaedic Hospital, where the pioneering technique has been piloted.

His surgeon, Derek *McMinn*, who performed the first resurfacing in 1991 and has since carried out another 1,000, said: "The problem with some hip replacements is that surrounding bone can be damaged, meaning that may have to be treated, and a further replacement could be needed in future.

"With resurfacing, the shaft of the femur is left intact, so if it fails in future years, the patient can still be referred for a conventional hip replacement."

## Crutches

Since being operated on, Des has moved swiftly from using a Zimmer frame, crutches and walking sticks to standing squarely on his own two feet again.

Now he hopes resurfacings will become more widely available on the NHS, enabling many more people to benefit.

He says: "One of the things that makes hip replacements fail is minor flaws in the components or procedure used, and if resurfacing avoids the need for second operations later, it will be more economical.

"For me, it gets better and better every day, so I can run to catch a bus now, my surgeon thinks I should be able to fence again soon, and it's improved my temper no end!"