

# Documentary to highlight ordeal of losing 12 stone

# My bullying hell made me 43 stone

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A LEIGH man who weighed a massive 43 stone has spoken of the ordeal of undergoing life-saving surgery.

Neil Bakewell, 33, of Hunter Seal, underwent a gastric bypass in March after years of failed diets and has since shed almost 13 stone.

The rapid weight loss has allowed him to live a more normal life and he even has plans to run a marathon.

"When I went in for the assessment, they said if I didn't have it done then I had less than five years to live," he said.

"I was terrified but the other half of me was trying to tell myself that I could lose the weight myself."

At that time he weighed the equivalent of 658 tins of baked beans.

## Petrified

Mr Bakewell said: "I was petrified because when you weigh 43 stone and are going on the operating table, it doesn't really mix very well."

Mr Bakewell, who stands 6ft 6in tall and runs a cab company with his wife Jenny, will feature in an episode of documentary series *Fat Doctor*.

The Discovery Home and Health programme follows NHS surgeon Shaw Somers who carried out the bypass at Chichester's St Richard's Hospital.

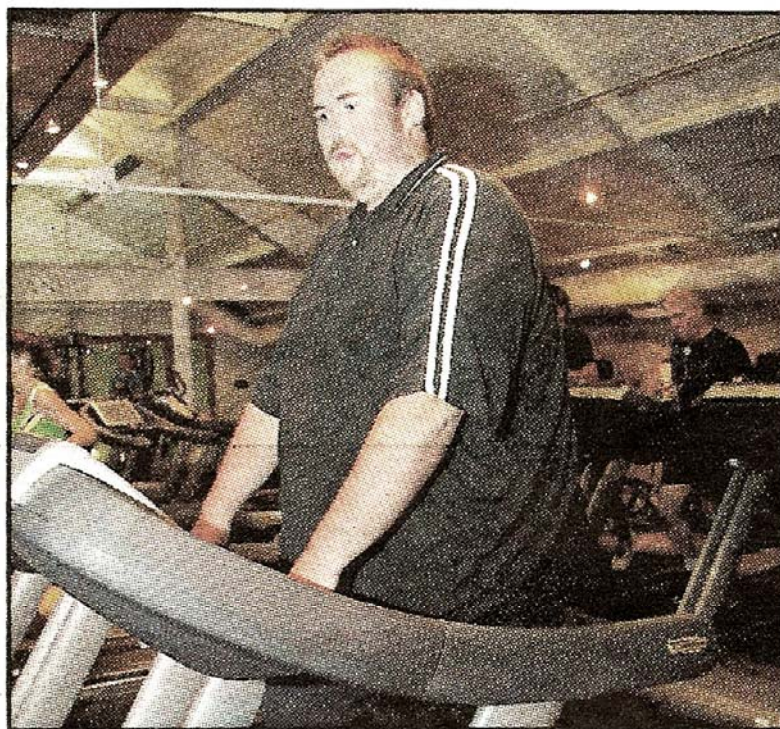
The struggle with his waistline began for Mr Bakewell aged nine when he developed a stutter almost overnight.

"The bullying led me to eat in secret and as I got older, it just increased," he said. "It was my secret psychological comfort."

Having tried slimming plans and even hiring a personal trainer and cook, he resorted to a medical solution after becoming unable to walk normally.

"I couldn't go down town and walk down the High Street because I couldn't walk more than 10 or 15 yards without having to stop and lean.

"Now I go on four or five-mile walks."



TREADMILL: Neil Bakewell lost 12 stone in six months GF2309093/2

And the benefits of the surgery have not just been physical.

Mr Bakewell said: "Your whole self-confidence changes. When I used to go out, people would just stop, stare and sneer but now I don't get any of that."

Now he has lost almost a third of his body weight, the former university American football player is able to train in the gym once again.

His aim now is to get his weight below 20 stone over the next 18 months, and the success of the surgery has been such that his wife plans to have the procedure done too.

He said: "We have obviously done this documentary and we are looking to do another one with me running a marathon at the end of it, but that might be a way off yet."

**FAILED DIETS:** Neil Bakewell before the gastric bypass operation which has changed his life

## BYPASS FACTS

What is a gastric bypass?

■ The most common form of the operation in this country is the Roux-en-Y Gastric Bypass. This involves part of the stomach and small intestine being bypassed leaving a smaller surface for food to be absorbed into the bloodstream

■ The upper part of the stomach is dissected away to form a pouch, which is then attached part way down the small intestine. The dual effect of restricting the space in the stomach and also reducing the amount of food absorbed leads to rapid weight loss. This makes it the recommended option for morbidly obese patients