

... week for a long time. ... the inquest continues today.

PEOPLE/Frank Tempest

Pit bull victim braves publicity to condemn owners



Frank Tempest . . . refuses to wear mask

Vivek Chaudhary

FRANK Tempest braved press photographers yesterday to expose the full extent of his facial injuries and speak for the first time about the frenzied attack by two pit bull terriers which disfigured him for life.

He held his wife Sylvia's hand and made no attempt to hide his grotesque injuries during the hour-long press conference.

"It has been very difficult to come to terms with what has happened to me," he said.

"I still have a series of operations to go through and the

treatment will take years. It was only when I came out of the operating theatre that I realised just how badly injured I was."

Mr Tempest, aged 54, a bakery worker from Lincoln and father of four, was attacked in May 50 yards from his home while returning from work.

"I thought I was going to die," he said. I was trying to fight them off to save my eyes. I was shouting 'Please help'. It got to the stage where I was too weak to fight back."

Since his release from the Leicester Royal Infirmary, he has refused to wear a mask to hide his injuries, earning praise from doctors and relatives.

"Frank's courage has amazed

us all," said Edna Friest, his sister-in-law, who accompanied him yesterday.

"He was given glasses with an artificial nose to wear in public but he only put them on a couple of times. He just took them off and said the world would have to accept him as he was," she added.

During the attack, which his plastic surgeon said was the worst he had seen in 20 years, the two dogs mauled Mr Tempest for 30 minutes, ripping off his nose, half his left ear and savaging his face and arms.

A large hole was gouged in his forehead, both eyes and lips were badly torn. Armed police sealed off the centre of Lincoln

to prevent the dogs from escaping. One was shot instantly, the other was captured and later put down.

"People should not be allowed to own dogs like this," he said as he criticised the Government for failing to go ahead with plans to destroy all pit bull terriers.

"They should bring in a registration scheme and dog owners should be responsible. They should never allow this sort of thing to happen to anyone."

Emergency legislation to curb dangerous fighting dogs was rushed through the Commons on Monday night. During a near all-night sitting the Government defeated a move to es-

establish a nationwide dog register by 303-260 votes, despite 19 Tory rebels defying a three-line whip and voting with the Opposition.

The Dangerous Dogs Bill will make it illegal to own an unlicensed pit bull terrier or Japanese tosa after November 30.

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