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THE LOOK OF LOVE  
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BLIND Phil Cuthbertson will see his bride walk down the aisle after breakthrough stem-cell treatment.

He lost his sight virtually I overnight four years ago.

But the storeman was determined to see again in time to tie the knot with, girlfriend Yvette Bruce.

The pair wed in just three weeks and already Phil, 25, says the treatment in Germany has helped bring I some of his vision back.

He said: "Some people might think this was a huge thing for me to do but I am so determined to see Yvette in her dress on our special day that it was an easy decision to make.

"Every few days or so, I seem to be able to make more things out.

"The other day, a pal was round with his baby. When the wee one dropped his dummy, I reached out and gave it back to him.

"I'd never have been able to do that before. Everything would have just been a blur."

Phil was robbed of his eyesight just weeks after he I started dating Yvette in 2003.

He had to have six months of tests before eventually being diagnosed with Leber's disease, a rare genetic eye condition which causes almost total blindness.

Last August, the Record told how Phil, of Paisley, was set to become one of the first people in the world to have the treatment.

He raised more than pounds 10,000 to have surgery at a clinic in Holland.

But just weeks before he was due to go, his hopes were dashed when the clinic was shut down.

Phil said: "I'd hoped to have the treatment well ahead of our wedding to give me more of a chance of being able to see.

"So it was a huge blow when that clinic shut.

"But I kept searching for somewhere else.

"It was not so easy because stem-cell treatments are pretty controversial and there are not many places do it.

"Eventually, I was put in touch with a guy who had been to a clinic in Germany for treatment for his blindness and he raved about it, so I wasted no time getting in touch."

Phil was given the go-ahead for treatment at the new Xcell Centre at the Institute for Regenerative Medicine in Cologne.

Last month, he travelled to Germany, where surgeons took stem cells from bone marrow in his hip.

A week later, he went back and they injected the cells into the base of his spine.

Phil said: "It was agony and both times I was only given a local anaesthetic, so it hurt.

"But I'd say it has been worth every penny. A few weeks on, and I am slowly starting to see more.

"Before, everything I saw was blurred and just basic shapes. Now I can see a little more detail.

"The doctors said it would take between eight weeks and six months for it to work fully but I am obviously hoping it happens sooner rather than later. It'll be just over eight weeks since the op when we get married, so fingers crossed."

Phil and Yvette have invited more than 200 guests to their wedding in Renfrew on August 31.

Customer services worker Yvette, 24, said: "He's been through so much. He's never down and he has never given up. He's amazing."

Fewer than 1000 people in the UK have Leber's, a condition which affects three times as many men as women and is passed on by mums to babies in the womb.

People are usually affected in their 20s and 30s and can lose almost all their vision in at least one eye within just a month.

Stem-cell treatment is the only one currently available. Experts say around 80 per cent of patients benefit.

The Government say not enough is known about the technique for it to be offered here.

But a growing number of Brits are travelling overseas for the treatment, which is also said to help ease symptoms of multiple sclerosis.

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