

EXCLUSIVE BY LUCY LAING

WHEN Jamie Miller needed a prosthetic arm - help was very close to hand.

His father Callum invested in a 3D printer and spent hours on the internet learning how to make a 3D printed limb for his son.

But he hasn't just stopped at one. Mr Miller has now made a staggering NINE printed arms for Jamie, ten.

His most recent creation is a blue arm with flashing LED lights.

Mr Miller, who lives in Stockton on Tees, said: 'Jamie loves this arm. He has taken it to school to show all his friends.

'He is very proud of it, and I was just glad that I was able to make it for him. He's never made an issue out of the fact that he only has one arm - he just gets on with life.'

Jamie was born without a left hand - which hadn't been picked up on any of the scans before his birth.

Mr Miller said: 'After he was born the nurse asked if we knew of any problems and we said no. Then we saw that he had no left hand, and it just hadn't been picked up on any of the scans.

'It was a shock but we never let Jamie think he had any disability. We just taught him to get on with life.

'We just taught him to do things with one hand - and by the age of three he was riding his bike without stabilisers.'

When Jamie was aged six, doctors at North Tees Hospital suggested that an operation could be carried out where they would remove some of his toes and use them to fashion fingers for him. But the family refused.

Mr Miller said: 'We didn't see the point of taking off his toes and putting them somewhere else. His lack of a left hand had never held him back, He plays his playstation better with one hand than most people do with two. He's always just adapted to things.

Last year Mr Miller, 51, who sells parts for a motor company, decided to take things into his own hands. He found a charity called Team UnLimited, who use 3D printers to help build new robotic limbs, but they had an 18 month waiting list.

So he bought a 3D printer himself that he'd found online after consulting social media groups.

At first he printed out toys as a test - and then decided to move on to a 3D arm after downloading designs online.

He said: 'I printed out a hand originally but there wasn't enough movement from it so I then moved onto a full arm.

'On the first attempt it turned out really well, which was really surprising. When Jamie put it on for the first time and started using it, it was really emotional. He went to school with it on and all his friends and teachers were really impressed by it. He says now that he feels more normal at school, which is great.

The arms work from leads running down from his elbow. By bending the elbow it creates movement in his fingers.

He said: 'Jamie now helps me design the arms - and tells me what he wants on it. He wanted LED lights on this arm, so I had to research how to do that.

Mr Miller, who is separated from Jamie's mother Suzanne Chester, 36, is now looking to upgrade the arm by installing electronic sensors in it.

He said: 'The 3D printers are ingenious - and there is no stopping us from now on.

Jamie, who has a sister Molly, 14, added: 'I feel like a superhero with my new arm. I would like to learn how to make them like my dad, so that I can help other people.'