

It's a cool damp morning early in August and as I sit here I am as warm as toast...in my (well, Cycletread's) heated vest. The 'Oxford Carbon FlexiHeat System' to give its full title.

This high tech little item came to me firstly via a phone call from Phil Scott who said he had a proposition for me, and I, always dreaming of being propositioned... not necessarily by P.S. I hasten to add...was hooked. "Would I like to trial this latest addition to the Oxford range of electrically heated kit for motorcyclists?" The fact that this call came on a Monday morning when the day before I literally froze my tits off riding past frosted fields on my way to our usual Sunday morning breakfast run to Helensville. Talk about 'the Gods moving in mysterious ways'.

Phil was to hand this over at the July BMWOR meeting which Cycletreads were hosting at their premises, however circumstances precluded me from being there. Apparently when Phil announced that I had agreed to be the guinea pig there was a great round of applause. I think that's what he said.

Now, for the vest.

It is a very well made item, comfortable and flexible with elasticized side panels. The vests main trick, a 7v Li-ion battery is contained in a zipped pocket on the left side, just above the waist. Small it is, 70mm/50mm/20mm and quite unobtrusive. The vest's internal 3.5mm connection slots into the base of the battery. Four heat settings, L, M, H & Max can be selected by a push on the battery's touch pad. I never did get to try it on Max. On the inside, behind a mesh liner you can see the four red heat panels. Two to cover the lower back and on the front two attend to those all important nipples. And it does work!

Setting off I set the H red led glowing, 45mins later I was ready to be turned and basted. Sitting outside the café I turned it down to L-green- which kept me cosy inside my outer jacket. For the run home, via the Puhoi Hotel, I used the M-yellow setting. For me, with my poor circulation, I could feel the heat reaching my shoulders and upper arms. The small of my back too enjoyed the warmth. Versatility wins, with no wires to get hooked-up on I've been wearing it in and out of my shed. Even switched off the vest is light, non bulky and keeps the heat in.

Maybe I will have to extend this test further, like say until my birthday...in October.

Some approx. numbers:

On low - 6hrs

On med - 4hrs

On high - 3hrs

Charging with supplied 240v - 2.5 hrs

Look out for my next test on heated gloves - with built in batteries.

John Samson  
Life member - BMWOR #1