

Alan tells me that I have spent nearly half as much as my bike cost on Motorbike clothing and accessories, so I consider myself well qualified to comment on what to look out for when buying Motorbike clothing – and what mistakes to try to avoid.

Clothing is either for style (if you're under 30), for comfort and warmth if you're over 40 and for safety – well if you're over 50 you might admit to this, but it should be a major concern for all of us. You can definitely have style, comfort or safety – but can you have all three?

Some of us feel the cold more than others – and it's probably colder in the pillion position than the rider (and that's not just because I only do 30 when I'm in front – I do 30 faster on my new Bandit!).

Cow-hide leather is the most protective clothing to wear – I know this because they told me so on my CBT course.

So here are my guide-lines on buying clothes.....

Top & Bottom

When buying leather garments, remember it is a once in 10 year investment and needs to out-last your motorbikes. It's worth buying good quality, well-made, comfy trousers that will take about 12 months to acquire that well-lived in appearance.

If you can only afford one piece of leather clothing, leather trousers are much more functional than a leather jacket – they stop you sliding around on the seat and will support your back and rear-end in the sitting position – and if you were to take a tumble, you're well protected in all the right places.

Leather trousers should fit – with all the things you are going to need to tuck in them on the coldest day. If they are snug when you buy them, you will be in for a broken zip or at least some really uncomfortable rides until they 'stretch' a little bit. Do not think that they will 'give' easily. Try them on in the shop – with your long-johns, T-shirt and jumper tucked in. Then go and sit on a bike. Are they still comfortable? And will they be comfortable after that pub-lunch, sticky pudding and a pint of beer has added 2 inches to your waist-line?

Leather jackets are probably more 'summer wear' than multi-seasonal, so if the budget is tight, buy a Cordura jacket sufficiently big to get a few layers underneath (don't forget to take the extra clothing to the shop with you).

Whether it's leather or Cordura, girls, do not be tempted to get a man's-size - because you are a different shape! There is less choice for girls – but at least the limited choice you do get will fit you in the right places.

If you do go for a leather jacket, it's good to have one that will zip onto the leather jeans. It's more comfy – and won't slide up when, I mean if, you come off!

Leather one-piece. Are you serious? How 'interesting' the serious poser, I mean biker, looks on a roasting day with his arms dangling to his knees! If you do get one, be careful not to wear it the day after than delicious curry, or you'll regret it!

In addition to the leather jeans and jacket, you'll need some over-trousers – otherwise one day you'll have to sit in soggy leather for the journey home – yuk! Either buy some plain waterproof overs or go a bit up-market and get some Cordura ones – but make sure they fit over your leathers. This combination will give you lots of choice, depending on the weather.

Gloves

You'll need some nice, soft, summer leather ones and some waterproof, warm, winter ones. Go for comfort and don't forget if you're a girl, don't get men's gloves.

Boots

Stylish or Waterproof? The only really waterproof guaranteed for life boots are Alt-berg - the others seem to be waterproof until the 12 month guarantee runs out. Alternatively go for stylish and buy some £15 rubber-boot-gloves from On Ya Bike and look a plonker, sorry less stylish, when it rains.

The Ultimate in Warmth and Comfort - Heated Garments.

When I first 'joined in' the biking scene I thought that biking was all about facing the elements and being tough. Well, it is for some, and if that's what you tell yourself when you have to peel your clothes off before getting into the bath to warm up, then you should be admired. Me? I discovered a heated vest at this year's motorbike show – now I don't notice the cold, and the truth is out - now you know why my CB 500 had to go, the battery couldn't cope!

There's vests, gloves, trousers and socks in the range – and I've even cut down what else I wear under my jacket. Pure heaven! So guys, if you want to keep your pillion happy.....how's about a belated Christmas present?

In conclusion, I think yes you can be stylish-enough (for the over 40's), comfortable and warm on a Motorbike, but it'll cost you! But what's the point of spending all that money on a bike and being wet, cold and miserable when the weather is typically British? It's definitely more fun when you're warm, dry and comfortable – or is that what cars are for....?