

MOTORCYCLE GOD!

Doing our bit...

When I think of volunteers rattling buckets of change outside the GPO comes to mind. But when a friend told me that I could use my motorcycle to volunteer I was intrigued to say the least. It was week three of Covid-19 and even though I was in the middle of organising an online new play festival, I was flying through the whiskey at night because I'd read Covid-19 does not like alcohol.

I called a bike pal, a 'Motorcycle God' from of old and said - look I'm busy with the theatre FIGHT BACK FESTIVAL but at the same time I want to help people on the front line. Bravo Charlie Tango was his reply. I said, have you joined the Guards? No he said, they need bikers to pick up PPE collections and deliver. I got the number and joined BCT on social media using 'Motorcycle God' as my reference. I kid you not.

Little did I know that many weeks later and many missed group alerts it came up on my phone. Sharing a ploughman's lunch with my family, the message read, "Pick up PPE Ballyfermot and drop to Kells, Co. Meath". My wife said, "Go for it"! It's been so long since I've been out that I'm actually nervous. I texted, "Yes, I'm from there". Time passed. Other riders texted availability. Then a text came with detail. Orla from BCT texted the information. It was "make a difference time", no matter how little.

It was exactly nine weeks since I last rode The old 749 home from a Mototechnic service. As I pulled on my leathers I was actually shaking, laughing to myself, what if I mess this up! It feels so long ago that I'm actually nervous. Gone are the days when the urge to burn your back tyre to warm up in a cloud of smoke. I'm middle aged!

Riding the bike out to Ballyfermot I was slowed by two checkpoints, waved through. Typical, I thought... if I'd just pulled out the bike (I wouldn't have) they'd have stopped me. I arrived at the 'pick up'. Loaded my rucksack and net on passenger seat and opened up the throttle. Don't ask me why, but I ended up going through the Phoenix Park! I could have taken the M50 but I was too damn anxious. I hate it at the best of times. More checkpoints, waved through. I felt like Matt Damon in Bourne. Filled up before the M3 and I was officially on target. Only me on an old Ducati, four trucks and lots of unmarked Garda cars...

The dreaded toll!!! Change. Why the hell aren't we free? An inch of rubber on the road. Coin dropped and I opened the Duc up and clicked up to 6th. Sublime, that feeling that only we can appreciate, engine hum, wind, holding on and relax! It's like Zen. Being part of the scene as apposed to looking through a windscreen.

Des at the delivery point in Kells was so positive and delighted. That was fast! Even on an old (or getting old) Ducati motorcycle is amazing. Slices through space and time. Job done. Home at my ease.

