

Transcript

Pushing the speed barrier: Trailblazing Women in Motorsports – Audio 3

Helen Owton

And are there any sudden moments in your career that are particularly memorable?

Lorna Stevens

Yeah, I've thought about this. The first one I can think of is, I had a baby late in life at 39 and went back to racing. About 18 months later. And at one point, I was going around the track and doing pretty well and suddenly lost concentration for some reason or no reason.

And I saw in my mind's eye the Teletubbies sun with the baby's head in it going like this. And a lot of what is going on here. This is your little boy. He's sitting in the pits there waiting for you to come back. And I go, oh, God, I just got to get off this track because this is not safe for me or anybody else.

So I just, got ran the best I could, having a totally lost concentration. Park the bike up, and gave him a great big hug. That was the first huge moment. And the second huge moment was, when I crashed really badly. And that was then on my son's fourth birthday.

At Eastern Creek turn five, which was a perfect corner. Everything was lined up beautifully. I was trusting my tires. It was a hot day. It was. Everything was going well. I'd managed to catch up. With everybody else having been overtaken on the straights, as always happened. I set myself up beautifully for this corner and high sided for some reason.

And the high side turned into an or. Well, time stood still, let's say, because it felt like about an hour's worth of split second where I was flung up into the air, like like you do. And your high side, the back end goes up. And I remember my legs being flung up at the back, and I was still holding onto the handlebars. The chin part of my helmet somehow got stuck in the yoke of the bike.

It was literally stuck in my head, was lodged in it, and my feet were up in the air somewhere. And I remember thinking to myself, if I don't get my head out of here, my neck is going to break. So somehow, I wrenched my head out. I don't know how, but I managed to get it out, and in doing so, of course, I upset the balance.

The physical balance that was going on the bike careered on top of me, spun around on top of me, and, the new foot pegs we'd put on, we'd forgotten to put the little bungs back on the foot pegs. So that part of it was razor sharp. That part dug into through all the armour on my boots and on my leg, and basically gouged the back part of my foot off and, broke my leg really, really badly.

And gave me chronic arthritis in my neck and in lots of other places. So I was pretty nasty. I spent ages getting to the hospital because there was a muck up with the hospital and the ambulance handover between the circuit and the hospital ambulance. And eventually got to the hospital and just stayed there for five months undergoing a bone surgery and, skin grafts and all sorts of lovely treatments.

Yeah, for about five months. Got home exhausted. Stayed that way for about 18 months. That was a that was the second big experience. Yeah. It was horrendous.

Helen Owton

Sounds horrendous.

Lorna Stevens

Yeah.

Helen Owton

Sounds like you were relatively lucky as well.

Lorna Stevens

I was close to losing the bottom part of my leg. Yeah. Yeah. Now, I was told that several times, and.

And several doctors have said since that, actually, I'd have been better off losing at least a foot. But hey, now it's good for the foot. Well, yeah.

Helen Owton

And you got back on a bike.

Lorna Stevens

Eventually. Took me a long time. I, I had absolutely no desire to get back on a bike, although that kind of feeling mellowed over about period of ten years.

Eventually I sat on a couple of bikes and, lusted over a couple of bikes. Eventually I bought another bike and, Yeah, it was fantastic. Although when I first got on, I had totally, totally forgotten what it's like to be at one with the elements outside being buffeted by the wind, blinded by the sun. You know, the overwhelming sound of the engine and the noise and everything like that was sort of.

Wow, I had forgotten what this is like. And, very quickly I went. Yeah, I remember how much I liked this. Got faster, started weaving the bike around. It was lovely. Yeah. And. Yeah. I've gone on since.