

Norton Notice

Volume1 Issue8

November1978

HERE'S ANOTHER ODD BODKINS (REPRINTED WITH THE PERMISSION OF DAN O'NEILL)

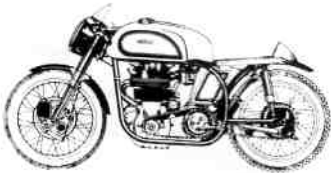


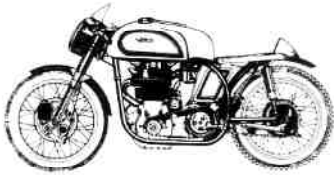
WHY DO YOU DRIVE A NORTON? TOUGH QUESTION.

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A PUBLICATION OF THE
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH





The NORTON NOTICE is published monthly by the Northern California Branch of the NOC.

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MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club includes voting privileges at all branch meetings, subscription to the NORTON NOTICE, and a standing invitation to all branch functions. Annual dues are \$5. Membership in the Norton Owners Club, based in England, includes full voting privileges at any General Meeting of the NOC, and any privileges resulting from affiliation of the Club with any other organization. In addition, members of the NOC will receive a copy of each issue of the club magazine, the ROADHOLDER, which is published bimonthly in England, and distributed to members by the branch secretary. Annual dues are £7. Full members of the NOC should pay \$20 per year, and "associate members" \$5 per year to the branch secretary-treasurer. Cheques should be made payable to the Norton Owners Club, and sent prior to the membership expiration date. Your cooperation in paying your annual dues promptly will be greatly appreciated.

ADVERTISING

Norton-related advertisements, etc., submitted in writing to the Editor, will be printed, free of charge, in the next two installments of the ad column, TRADING POST. Please contact the Editor if you wish to discontinue or renew an advertisement.

MEMBER INPUT

Members are strongly encouraged to submit any articles, technical info, photographs, jokes, comments, or any other items which might be of value to readers of the NORTON NOTICE. Any questions concerning this subject may be directed to the Editor, and items to be published should be mailed to the Editor in as concise a form as possible. More membership involvement in the NORTON NOTICE is wanted, but please try to make the Editor's job easier by getting things to him early and in legible writing. Cooperation in this regard will be appreciated.

MEMBERSHIP LISTS

An updated membership list will be sent out to all members periodically by the branch secretary-treasurer. Machines owned by each member will be included with addresses and phone numbers in an effort to increase member interaction.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Members are requested to notify the branch secretary-treasurer as soon as possible of any change of address or telephone number. Failure to do so will result in all branch mailings being non-deliverable.

BRANCH MEETINGS

Meetings of the Northern California Branch are traditionally held on the second Thursday of each month, starting at 7:30PM. Location of branch meetings is variable, but will be announced each month in the NORTON NOTICE. As a general rule, the meeting will be held at suitable public establishment in the bay area, and any suggestions of new venues are greatly appreciated. Occasionally meetings will be held at members' homes, and anyone wishing to show off his or her bikes to the other members is strongly encouraged to do so by hosting a branch meeting. Please get in touch with the secretary-treasurer if you would be interested in hosting a meeting.

BRANCH RIDES

Branch rides are generally held on Sundays, with occasional Saturday outings, and will usually meet at 10AM. The exact location of each ride venue and a proposed itinerary will be announced in the NORTON NOTICE. Members are requested to make suggestions to their branch officers if they know of a good ride the others might enjoy. Additional branch outings will be announced from time to time.

TRADING POSTFOR SALE

Norton International engine. Top end apart, bottom end together. Complete enough to be rebuilt. Also, Ariel 650 engine, gas tank, oil bag, battery and miscellaneous parts. Buy both and get Buster the dog for free!
PHIL LANG: (707)643-6837

1965 Atlas "750" (not totally stock). Some damage to left side in recent accident: gas tank and battery case smashed. Sell/negotiate.
MARC DAVIDOFF: (415)391-4528 ANYTIME

1959 Norton Nomad drag bike. Highly modified 600cc engine including head work and Lucas K2FR racing magneto. Engine is assembled but bike is not. Spare frame and engine with many engine and transmission spares. \$600/offer.
JOE CAPORALI: (415)521-7687

1969 Norton P11 Ranger. Norton engine and running gear on a Matchless frame. All is original and in good running condition. Offer.
TOM EARLE: (408)353-1060

1974 (1975?) Norton Commando 850. Selling for parts. Complete engine: \$600. Will trade.
BILL SANDFORD: (408)739-7714

1975 Norton Commando MkIII Interstate. Cherry condition and ready for cross-country trip. Recently rebuilt engine. \$1600/best offer.
DENNIS MAGRI: (415)586-7756

Norton Commando MkIII mufflers. Stock and in "peachy keen" condition. Make an offer.
COREY LEVENSON: (415)681-2619 EVENINGS

WANTED

Side stand for 1970 Commando, front fender, Interstate or Roadster seat in any condition.
DAVE CRONIN: (415)566-3119

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS!

Please let me know if your ad should not be run in the next issue. Likewise, if you wish to renew it after it has run twice, tell me.

To place an ad in the NORTON NOTICE, write down all pertinent information, including your name and phone number, and send to the Editor of this rag prior to the 25th.

STEVE COBURN
P.O. BOX 236
LA HONDA, CA 94020

NOVEMBER BRANCH MEETING

The meeting this month will be down on the peninsula again at a venue which has proven to be very popular in the past. A few members have seemed a bit concerned about the relative formality of the B.B.C. compared to some of our other meeting spots. I assure you all that the owner, his staff, and the clientele have been perfectly hospitable to everyone both of the times we've met there. In fact, the owner said he enjoys having all the good old English motorcycles parked out front! The major item on the agenda this time is a discussion of the issue of whether or not to allow people who do not currently own a Norton to be associate members. I hope everyone who possibly can will come this time and put in his/her two bits on this controversial issue.

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH

TIME: 7:30PM

PLACE: BRITISH BANKERS CLUB

1090 El Camino Real

Menlo Park

Phone: 327-8769

NOVEMBER BRANCH RIDE

Once again our ride will be on a Saturday for the benefit of all those who seem to prefer that day (as well as people like me who just can't make it on Sunday). We will revert to Sundays in December. The ride will meet at the usual venue in Sausalito and we will head up the coast into some of the more beautiful parts of Marin, and plan to stop in Bolinas for lunch. Then a brisk ride north to the Russian River, a possible stop in the mid-afternoon at one of the little towns along the river, and back south again via Petaluma to check out the "Bug Capital of the World" (see this month's installment of ODD BODKINS on page 8). If all goes well, this should be one of the best branch rides ever.

DATE: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH

TIME: 10:00AM

PLACE: SAUSALITO - The parking lot behind the Sausalito Inn and next to the dock for the ferry to S.F.

Please be on time. We leave at 10:30!

OCTOBER BRANCH MEETING - SECRETARY'S REPORT

This report will be extremely difficult for me to write, considering the nature of the issues which were discussed (yes, that's a euphemism) at the October meeting at Edinburgh Castle. On the positive side, I would like to thank the twenty or so members and their friends, spouses or whatever who showed up. Having a large group like that makes it all seem more relevant. I'd also like to thank those of you who attempted to calm things down and inject some reason into what at times seemed quite absurd. Thankyou.

Those members who did not make it to the show are probably beginning to wonder what it was that happened at a Norton Owners Club meeting to warrant such an introduction. Well....I'll try to make it short and sweet, and hopefully, accurate. I apologize in advance for errors in details, interpretation, and so forth. I must confess that I did not take notes at the meet, and therefore must trust my memory. Here goes.

The first order of business was the election of our new President. After being persuaded not to withdraw from the election, Maya Peterson did receive several votes. However, Bob Bausch was the clear favorite of the members present. No votes were received by mail or phone, and so Bob Bausch is now the President of the Branch.

Following the election, Bob Getts, I believe, brought up the issue of Associate Membership, and specifically whether or not we should have anyone in the club who does not own a Norton. The essence of Bob's argument, if I understood it correctly, was that all members of the NOC, regardless of whether they pay dues to the NOC in England, should be required to own a Norton motorcycle at the time of joining and at the time of membership renewal. He stated that the NOC is a "marque club" and that the club rules clearly require members to be Norton owners. He asked for a secret ballot vote on the issue, and after considerable discussion on the reasons for allowing non-Norton owners to be Associate NOC Members and the reasons for not doing so, there was indeed a secret ballot vote. The result was 12 votes in favor of Bob's motion requiring the ownership of a Norton, and 11 votes against. It was not determined whether there were indeed 23 voting members present, and so there is reason to believe that the vote might be unconstitutional in that regard. In any event, a heated discussion ensued, which I would prefer to go into in the form of an editorial. See adjacent column.

There was no other business, to the best of my recollection, other than Bob Bausch's announcement that he has not yet done the T-shirt work.

EDITORIAL - WHO CAN BE IN OUR CLUB?

I feel strongly about this issue, as those present at the October meeting are well aware, and think it best to use this format to go into my feelings and reasons, rather than discussing them in the Secretary's report. This should at least allow me to express them fairly freely, without having to feel sensitive to criticism about the use of my office as means of changing the club. This makes it much easier.

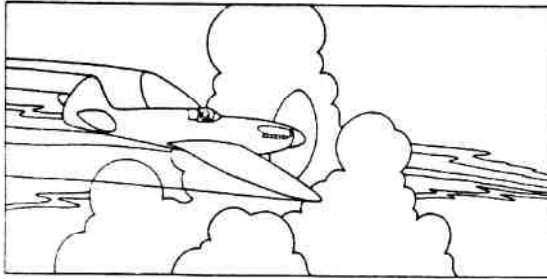
First of all, I would like to say that the idea of having Associate Members in our Branch was originally brought up by Bob Marshall, our former Branch President, who resigned in August. He felt, and I agreed, that we should do whatever we could to encourage people interested in the Norton motorcycle, whether or not they happen to own one. Both of us had met many Norton owners around the bay area who were interested in the club, but were somewhat put off by the \$15 dues. We felt that we could establish a Northern California Norton Association, encompassing those people who were interested enough in the NOC and the ROADHOLDER to pay the full dues as well as those others who just wanted to be "associated" with the local club. After considerable publicity and group discussion, this plan was voted down, and an alternate proposal was introduced by Bob Bausch. Thus, we ended up with Associate Membership. Probably as an oversight on my part, there was very little or no discussion of the other issue: should all members, including Associate Members, be required to own Nortons when they join and renew? It had been our initial intent when the NCNA proposal was introduced to allow anyone to join. Then when the plan was changed in an effort to retain the NOC Branch status of our local group, the other issue got lost in the shuffle.

Well, it seems that some members feel quite strongly about this issue. Getts, and others as well, insist that we not have any members in our Branch unless they own a Norton. They say that if we allow a Triumph owner to join, even if he says he is looking for a Norton to purchase, then we are opening the doors to all the motorcyclists in town. I do not agree at all. What do you think?

PLEASE NOTE:

This letter from our newly elected Branch President did not arrive until after the November issue had been sent to the printer. I am sorry it had to be copied in order to make it in this month's mailing, but I felt it to be important enough that it shouldn't wait 'til December.

Steve



ROBERT BAUSCH
671 Eighteenth Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94121
(415) 752-6400

October 26, 1978

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I appreciate the confidence shown in me in the election last meeting, and will do my utmost to ensure I deserve it. Our club has prospered in recent years and we now have a strong membership and the ability to take on new and exciting projects. This should be a great year for our branch!

It would seem that the major issue at the last meeting became the question of eligibility for Associate Membership in the No. Cal. Branch of the N.O.C. and, specifically, whether or not the prospective associate member must own a Norton.

This could prove to be a weighty issue at the best of times (witness the 10-11 vote cast at the meeting, about as even a decision as you can get, short of an outright tie), but it was not helped one bit by what really became a shouting match. I must say I would rather have been elected President at a less inauspicious occasion, at least a quieter one.

Since we are all relatively sane individuals and are all adults, I feel questions such as this can find their solution along quieter paths; and, let it be said: nothing was solved by the fireworks at that meeting.

So, let us smooth our feathers and find out how we all feel about this subject. At the next meeting, as mentioned elsewhere in this issue, we will decide upon the exact wording of what we will be voting on.

I might at this point propose that we form a membership committee that would vote upon the application of each non-Norton owner wishing to join as an Associate Member, thus enabling us to evaluate the sincerity and real interest of the applicants. We will discuss this further at the next meeting.

Also, let us remember that this aspect of membership concerns only the Associate Members of our club. The Northern California Branch of the parent British N.O.C. will remain as is, and full membership in this, as always, is only obtainable if the applicant owns a Norton.

By the way, we are presently in correspondence with the Membership Secretary of the N.O.C. in England to ask them if they have had similar situations there, and how they have resolved them.

Here's hoping we can come to an amicable solution that pleases all, so we can move on to further enjoyment of our club.

EDITORIAL-PART II - THIS IS HOW I FEEL

Now that you have the details of the various proceedings leading up to the controversy at and, as well as a synopsis of the arguments presented by Bob Getts, his wife, and others at the October meeting, I would now like to give you my own feelings on the subject. In my own mind, there is no doubt about how the majority of our Northern California Branch members feel, but there are those who really do believe they speak for the silent masses when they say that we must keep out those folks who don't own a Norton. I do not begin to believe that, and so I ask you to express your own feelings on this issue in whatever fashion suits you. I will gladly print all letters sent in, and will even send out some sort of a poll if I could convince you folks to respond to it. Anyway, please don't stay silent on this issue. Come to a meeting, or a ride, or write to me, but let me know how you feel. That's the only way I can do the job I want to do for the club and you.

My fundamental argument is very simple. The Northern California Branch of the NOC should do everything it can to help keep the Norton motorcycle alive. It should help current and prospective owners to find whatever parts or tools they might need. It should provide the necessary mechanisms for the exchange of all types of Norton-related information. Before all else, it should do whatever it can to encourage people to own and ride Nortons in this day of the Japanese onslaught. Without going into all the details, I would like to say that since I've been in the club I have been most impressed with how much has been done. Since becoming Secretary-Treasurer, I have tried to continue what had already been started by my predecessors. I have tried to be responsive to the ideas and suggestions of other Norton fanciers, regardless of whether or not they belonged to the club. In order to do that, I have at times had to try some new ideas and different ways of doing things. If in the process I have offended any tradition-minded older members who wonder why things can't be done the way they always have been, I am sorry. It hasn't been my intention to offend anyone. I have merely tried to bring new ideas into the structure of the club in an effort to keep Nortons on the road.

rather than expound on all the reasons why we should allow for some flexibility in branch membership requirements, I think I will just let you read the letter Steve Murray sent in.

LETTER FROM STEVE MURRAY

10-13-78

Dear Steve,

I just want to express my appreciation to you for the fine job you did on behalf of the "Associate Members" at the last meeting. I certainly did not want to be the cause of any hard feelings or internal dissention among club members. If I had known this to be the case, I would not have joined. I feel some members are being terribly short-sighted in their views of not allowing any non-Norton owning people to become "Associate Members" in the future. I'm sure most people who own Harleys, Kawasakis, BMWs, etc. are not in the least interested in joining a Norton club. There are fewer and fewer Nortons in this world every day, and those of us interested in keeping Norton alive should be able to get together and do so, irregardless(sic) of present Norton ownership.

This is a very important matter and I think, as such, there should be a more representative vote on the subject. From what I understand, previous mail-in votes have received poor response, but I think we would do better than the 18 members that were present at the meeting. Anyway, as of now, I am a "social"? member of the Norton Owners Club, and as such I will contribute as much as I can to the furtherance of the Norton name.

Again, thanks a lot. Sincerely,
Steve Murray

And thanks to you too Steve. You have, in my opinion, hit the proverbial nail right on the head. I know there are others out there who might be riding another British motorcycle at the present time but want to get a Norton, as in your case, and I think they share all your feelings. What we really have to ask ourselves now is whether we want to be solely an ultra-exclusive "marque club" or whether we want to concern ourselves more with the fundamental goals expressed above. If we insist on all members owning a Norton at the time of joining and membership renewal, then we might have to expel a long-standing member in the event that his machine is stolen. Would that make sense? On the other side of the coin is the argument about every motorcyclist and his mother asking for membership in our club. Does any one of us really believe that might happen? I admit to starting a precedent, but I do not believe it to be a dangerous one. And I sincerely believe the benefits will easily justify any risks.

In response to a request from Gregg Bennett that I put something in the NORTON NOTICE about the "evolvment and historical achievements of the Norton motorcycle" I am adding a new column this month. This is something I have wanted to do for several months now, but somehow managed to procrastinate until Greg's letter came. I will welcome any contributions from you people out there, so please feel as free as you like and write something for the HISTORY OF NORTON column. I'm calling it by that name for lack of a better title. I will try to keep the format very loose, and most anything on the subject will be acceptable.

HISTORY OF NORTON - THE NORTON "INTERNATIONAL"
(from MOTORCYCLING Sports Model Road Tests)

Fully equipped replica of a road-racing layout which has well-nigh dominated the circuits of the world since the late summer of 1930, the 490 c.c. Model 30 "International" Norton is justly regarded as the ultimate in single-cylinder performance.

Not only in the matter of speed has this sturdy bevel-driven overhead-camshaft engine commanded respect -- it possesses a reputation, underlined by continual success, for outstanding reliability in all conditions of racing. Yet all this has been achieved without resort to freakish design.

Within the confines of a 79-mm. bore and 100-mm. stroke, the "International" a measure of urge which has brought envy and despair to many would-be copyists. If the foregoing were all that could be credited to the Norton it would be sufficient cause for proud boasting -- but super engines demand equally high standards of hairline steering and roadholding -- yet another feature of the famous Bracebridge St. products.

Remembering these facts brought a keen sense of anticipation when we took over an example of the latest "International" for test. Here was a specimen of race breeding in the true sense of that much-abused term. This was the machine which set a standard in high-speed handling, complete with the recently developed "Roadholder" forks and rear springing incorporating the crystallized experience of first class racing men. (I really like this guy's writing).

Once astride the "International" there can be no doubting its ancestry: the rider is poised above the job and footrests are set to give that braced, taut position so necessary in high-speed road work. Yet the 28-in. saddle height will permit even a five and a half footer to place a toe on the ground without effort.

The bars are adjustable for height and angle to reasonable limits, the gear-change lever can be operated without removing the foot entirely from its rest and the rear brake pedal is correctly set with an adjustable stop.

Following a short experience with the particular machine on test, starting became a surprisingly easy matter. With a cold engine it was advisable to put the model onto its central stand so that a hand over the air intake could accompany the necessary swinging kick. (Now is that a "real motorcycle" or what?) Failure to set the ignition control at half-retard would bring a hefty reminder, whilst care had to be taken to avoid overflowing the downdraught T.T.-type carburetter. The air control could practically be forgotten in the warm weather which accompanied the testing period.

Some clutch drag was experienced, however, and engagement of bottom gear was liable to produce a decided "clonk," although once on the move no further trouble occurred and there was no tendency to "creep" during traffic halts with the clutch held out.

In view of the standard high bottom gear (10.8 to 1) it was, perhaps, just as well that the clutch was more than up to its job, as despite frequent trips through heavy traffic no untoward slipping occurred.

Changing from bottom to second gear (6.18 to 1) demanded intelligent use of the clutch to avoid transmission snatch, for there is an appreciable difference in ratio. Nor is slow marching in the 4.64 top gear a practice to be recommended on a machine so obviously suited to hard and fast motorcycling, but it was easily possible to dawdle at 22 to 23 m.p.h. with the ignition one-third retarded before a drop into third was indicated.

With T.T. coverage requiring the tester's presence in the Isle of Man during temporary ownership, what better place to assess the abilities of this thoroughbred road-burner? accordingly, HOE 445 became a very useful means of transporation, more than capable of making up for the usual delay when a tired tester wished to reach distant parts of the course to witness early practising!

Many thanks to MOTORCYCLING for letting us reprint this excellent test report. Hope you all enjoyed it as much as I did. Great stuff!

WHAT IS BIG BROTHER UP TO NOW?

This goodie was sent in recently by Steve Murray, Triumph owner who has just joined our Northern California Branch as a "social member" (see report on October meeting). Steve is very eager to buy a Norton, and would appreciate any leads. This item he sent me should be of considerable interest to all motorcyclists, particularly those of us who like to make our own decisions about how much or how little we want in the way of safety devices.

MOTORCYCLE LAWS:
THOSE YOU LIKE AND THOSE YOU DON'T

It's difficult to get some riders to fight helmet and headlight laws. They feel these laws are a safety feature and as such must be compulsory. However, lurking out there in politician land are a lot of laws and proposed laws that they may not find so attractive. When those laws hit, they will not be in favor of them. The time to fight is now, before it goes too far to stop. Eike laws are like an avalanche. The helmet law is like a few rocks at the top of the hill. It can be dealt with there. At the bottom, nothing can be done. By now you may suspect I'm getting a bit carried away. Let's check out some of the laws already in effect.

In 1978, you no longer get a headlight switch. Your light is on even where there is no light-on law, whether you like it or not. Now, we can no longer use the throttle return screw for trips. It's gone too. They will allow you to buy and use a \$30 Vanda Cruise though. Does that make sense? Does your bike have crash bars? They are mandatory in Arkansas and Tennessee. If you have steering or frame modifications, your bike is not legal in Hawaii, Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Dakota and Washington, D.C. Have you altered your fenders? Well, that's not legal in Maryland or Pennsylvania. Reflectors on helmets are law in Colorado, Kansas and West Virginia. Glass pack mufflers are illegal in Wisconsin. You cannot ride two abreast in Wyoming or Pennsylvania. If you have a radar detector, that's illegal in Virginia. Transistor-controlled ignition and fixed jetting in the carbs are both E.A.A. (?) requirements on the new bikes. (Isn't this incredible?)

That is a sample of some laws already in effect over and above the helmet and light laws. Are there any you don't think should be compulsory? Here's some that are proposed, but not in effect.. YET. One advocated by the American Automobile Assn. that a law be passed to require all riders and passengers to be of legal driving age. (That is really unbelievable, don't you think?)

In Britain, the Road Research Lab has developed a chest protector for bikes. It mounts on the frame and sticks up in front of the rider's chest. It's supposed to protect you in an accident. The California Highway Patrol Engineering Section is studying to find if it's necessary to develop safety standards for motorcycle tires and rims. Standby for tire and rim law in a government near you. These are only a few of the many proposed laws. Also proposed are fluorescent vests, seat belts, etc.

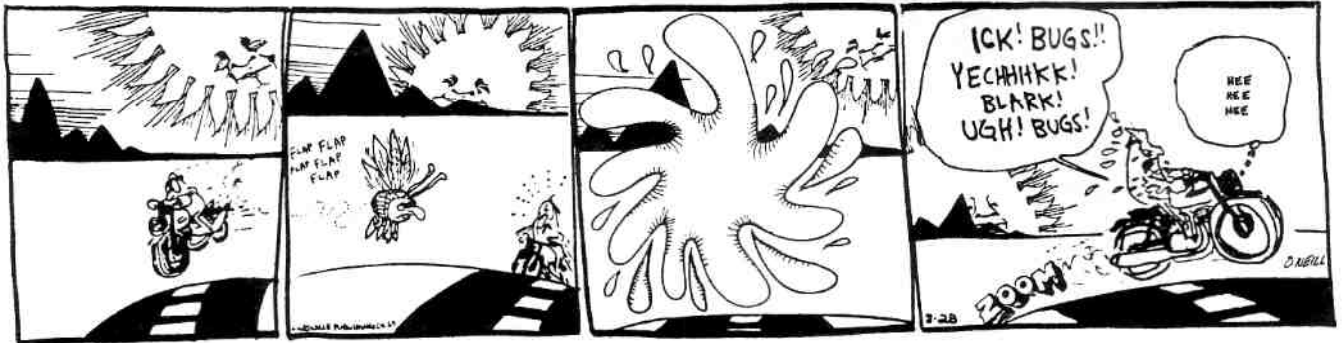
(This next one really takes the cake) Albert Benjamin Kelley, a highway safety specialist, at an A.A.A.M. meeting proposed cutting down on motorcycle accidents by banning all sale and riding of motorcycles. Is he serious? Yes. Not only that, but people in government are listening to him and others like him. This idea of banning motorcycles totally is not new. Unfortunately, it's got some powerful people proposing and backing it. One is Dr. Susan Baker who seems to be thinking along parallel lines with Mr. Kelley. She is also a member of AAAM.

Further to Mr. Kelley's proposal, he said that motorcycles should no more be allowed on the road than dangerous patent medicine be allowed in the family medicine cabinet. He states that 90% of motorcycle accidents result in injury or death, compared to 10% for cars. The figures are the D.O.T.'s, so judge accordingly. He failed to define injury. It could be a bruise or cut when your bike is dumped. He also avoids mentioning that most motorcycle accidents are caused by a car. His idea is like banning seals from the ice floes because they keep getting killed there each year. Mr. Kelley said the ban could be gradual, leading to complete elimination. This is his outline:

1. You could limit the size of the bike in terms of its power.
2. You could regulate age of riders.
3. You could limit the number and types of highways motorcycles use.

Maybe the government is right about compulsory everything. The government, which in wartime told us to fight and die for freedom, is now telling us that we can't have it because it may be dangerous.

This third installment of ODD BODKINS was chosen in honor of this month's branch ride. Perhaps we should return via Petaluma after our ride through northern Marin, and see if we have better luck than Fred and Hugh did when they rode through the world's bug capital. Hope you enjoy this one. (Reprinted with the permission of D.O'Neill)



Next month, look for Bruce the highway patrolman to take on Hugh in a one-on-one road race to find out whether a Harley can keep up with Big Norton. Does he stand a chance?