

Norton Notice

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

NO. 107

MAR., 1987



**THIS COULD BE
YOURS!!!**

See page 2



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH



Norton Notice

is published by the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain members regarding all aspects of the Norton motorcycle, including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque.

NORTON NOTICE is a reflection of its readership, who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, photograph (original or otherwise) as long as it is in good taste, so that other Norton enthusiasts may enjoy it. For Branch members who cannot attend club meetings or club rides, the NORTON NOTICE affords an opportunity to share experiences and information with the membership of the Branch, and to bring the Branch members closer together.

The deadline for items to be submitted for publication is the 15th of each month.

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is available for \$25.00 per year.

Membership dues are payable to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer.

Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, that month being designated by the last number of the individual's membership number as located on the mailing label of the NORTON NOTICE or the membership card. For example, 745/2 denotes member 745 with dues expiring on the 1st of February.

All changes of address should go to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer, not the NOTICE Editor.

Subscription to the NORTON NOTICE only is available for \$15.00 per year. This does not include membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club, nor does it afford any of the rights or privileges of membership in the NOC.

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club entitles a member to monthly issues of the NORTON NOTICE and bi-monthly issues of ROADHOLDER magazine, which is sent directly from England, keeping members informed of Norton owners' activities worldwide. Membership provides voting privileges at all NOC and Branch meetings, and allows one to purchase Norton spares directly from England, at significant savings, through the NOC Spare Program.

On the cover: Sorry, we're not giving it away. This handsome restoration was on display at the 1986(?) Annual Norton Picnic at Huckleberry Flat. If you are the owner, how about giving us the full story?

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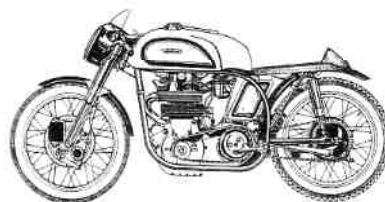
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Important!

(Please take note of the following fine print.)

The object of the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage and develop all motor-cycling activities. The Club's members are owners of Norton motorcycles, and they often submit for publication in the Norton Notice technical tips pertaining to motorcycles of the Norton marque. Technical tips so published have been reviewed for technical content and are believed to be both acceptable and workable, but no guarantee is made or implied that they will work correctly, nor is any liability assumed by either the Norton Owners Club or the authors for any problems resulting from use of these technical tips. The Club also assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. Norton Notice articles or other material express the authors' views only and not necessarily the official policy of the Norton Owners Club or its Northern California Branch. The editor reserves the right to accept, reject or alter all editorial and advertising material submitted for publication. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you know.



1963 catalog drawing of Manx 30M and 40M



UPCOMING EVENTS

NOTICE: IN THE EVENT OF RAIN ON THE DAY OF A CLUB RIDE, THE RIDE IS AUTOMATICALLY POSTPONED ONE WEEK. ALSO, RIDERS SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF OIL AND GASOLINE BY THE SCHEDULED DEPARTURE TIME AND ALL PERSONAL PROBLEMS TAKEN OF. IN OTHER WORDS . . . FULL TANKS AND EMPTY BLADDERS!



DATE	DAY	EVENT
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**Feb. 28- Mar. 8	Sat., Sun.	*Daytona Bike Week.
**Mar. 12	Thurs.	*Branch meeting, Class Reunion, 2700 El Camino Real, Palo Alto, 7:30 P.M.
**Mar. 22	Sun.	*Branch ride, Oakville Grade. Our Ride Coordinator takes us through some of her favorite territory. Details on page 4.
**Mar. 28- Mar. 29	Sat., Sun.	*AFM New Riders School and AFM races (Sun.) at Sears Point.
**Mar. 29	Sun.	*Swapmeet at San Mateo County Fairgrounds. \$3.00 adm. + \$2.00 parking. Sponsored by Western Riders Inc.
**Apr. 9	Thurs.	*Branch meeting. Place TBA.
**Apr. 19	Sun.	*AFM races at Sears Point.
**May 2- May 3	Sat., Sun.	*Branch overnighter at Jerry Kaplan's. Details next Issue.
**May 9- May 10	Sat., Sun.	*AFM New Riders School and races (Sun.)
**July 11- July 12	Sat., Sun.	*Laguna Seca.

MARCH

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29	30	31				

APRIL

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DOWN THE ROAD:

May: Morro Bay overnighter
 June: Don leads us through North Bay roads.
 July: Fourth of July Picnic and Beer Bust on the Santa Cruz beaches.
 August: Annual Club Rally, tentatively set for Grover Hot Springs.



TWISTGRIP TWADDLE

Another month has come and gone, and in its wake we have a new meeting venue, beautiful weather unlooked-for, a new controversy and, above all, a thriving Norton Club Branch.

The new meeting place is the Prince of Wales pub on 25th Avenue in San Mateo. Good English ales in bottle and on tap, hearty British pub grub, a congenial "guy'nor," and a meeting room upstairs combine to augur well for future West Bay-Peninsula meetings. A tip of the presidential hat to Don Danmeier for locating the spot. We'll be back.

The "beautiful weather" refers to the branch ride on Sunday, Feb. 15th. Yours truly saw the rain coming down in sheets the night before and went to bed expecting to sleep late, but nooooo--a clear blue sky called me back at 8:15 a.m. and, except for an odd minute or two of sprinkle, kept me and at least eight others company all day long. See Ride Report elsewhere. Thanks to Rahers of San Jose for their hospitality (and sympathy to Mark Wiessendanger, who fell off enroute).

Lively debate was had at the meeting concerning Assembly Bill 36, the helmet law, and whether the Club has any business injecting itself into the political process by taking an official stand on the issue. Alan Goldwater played devil's advocate, ensuring that when those assembled ultimately decided to go for it, it was a deliberated decision. A letter is going from me to Sacramento in the name of the Club, but Lou says space is too tight to reprint it for you all this month, so look for it next time. However, see also the form of suggested letter appearing in this issue of the Notice if you would like to write to the Assembly yourself to oppose the bill. Write soon, whichever way you come out on this topic. It's a cinch too few other motorcyclists will. (Incidentally, rider John Paliwoda of North Hollywood has volunteered to travel to Sacramento at his own expense to present some opposition to the bill in committee. I call that dedication. Go for it, John!)

Other signs that the Branch is alive and well include the fact that, per our Secretary-Treasurer, membership is stabilizing and, through the diligence of our V-P/Rides Coordinator, we have volunteer Ride Marshalls through at least August. This increased level of support is most encouraging and bodes well for the future of the Club in this area.

I've been in contact with the presidents of the Norton clubs in Los Angeles and San Diego, and we are hoping to be able to coordinate on a Morro Bay overnighter in May. More details as they develop, watch the Notice.

Some good events coming up--see you there!

John, Prez.

Form of suggested letter to Sacramento re the Helmet Bill:

Honorable
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr./Mrs. _____:

I am a California motorcyclist and a member in good standing of the Norton Owners Club, Northern California Branch. I have heard about Assembly Bill 36, the mandatory helmet law, and want you to know that I am against this legislation. I want the decision whether to wear a helmet to remain my own. If I choose not to wear one, I endanger only myself, and it is my right as an American citizen to make that choice. Please oppose A.B. 36.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Send to your Assembly representative or, if you don't know who that is, at least send to Willie Brown, Speaker of the Assembly. Better yet, draft your own, personal letter for maximum impact--whatever your opinion on this (or any other) matter!

J.C.

JOIN THE RIDES THEY'RE FUN!!!

• COORDINATION OF THE RIDE •

MARCH: Oakville Grade Ride. We will meet at TT Motors in Berkeley and head north on 80. The Oakville Grade starts on 29 between Yountville and St. Helena. It's a good road, but twists like a snake with a stomachache. Don't show up unless both rider and bike are running on all cylinders--getting you off that mountain will be difficult. There's a stop in Glen Ellen for lunch and birthday cake--Suran Meissner's Interstate, Alan Goldwater, and yours truly are all having birthdays. I've arranged with a cafe for a cake.

After lunch the ride runs over country roads to the coast and then on the Marshall road to Petaluma. We should be in Petaluma by 4:00 so that most people can get home before dark. There will be lots of scenery and not too many cars.

Maps will be distributed at the start of the run. Please come early so that everyone will be ready to go shortly after 10:00 AM.



HAPPY

BIRTHDAY!!!

APRIL: People who want to ride down to Tulare as a club might call me at (415)654-1933 (eves.) to arrange a place and time.

JULY: Many people are planning to attend the Laguna Seca races. Anybody interested in riding down as a group?

AUGUST: Annual Club Rally. We need volunteers to help with the logistics! Generous helping of good karma (which may help prevent breakdowns). Call me to offer help with the Rally.

ALSO: Someone asked about a Mount Hamilton ride. Does anyone want to lead it? How about you, Mark?

Margie Siegal



EDITOR'S NOTES



Hi Folks,

Well, I had hoped to start our informal tech talk in this issue but, owing to the disappearance of one of our members, that is not possible. The tape transcript of the meeting was sent to each participant so each could have a chance to tidy things up a bit. Everyone has responded except for Scot who I have been unable to reach. He is in the throes of settling into a new house in need of repair and may have been overcome by the amount of labor involved. So, until he surfaces, we'll just have to wait. In the meantime, feast your eyes on the upcoming ride schedule which Margie has put together and by all means consider joining us for the next event.

*****Thanks to Phil for the Jan. 21 MotorCycle News articles about the Norton revival (See pages 10 and 11.)

*****Labor problems at the Lucas Bridgton factory and elsewhere in England have brought to a halt production of Mini, Metro, and Rover 200 cars at the Austin Rover plant. The action threatens the future of the relationship between the two firms. It also affects suppliers who try to obtain Lucas parts for your Norton. This latest labor strife does not have any affect, however, on the notorious Lucas reputation as no light is still no light.

*****Harley has a new wrinkle in sales these days. According to a news release from Buzz Buzzell in Milwaukee, "If a rider owns an [Evolution Sportster XLH-883] and trades it for a new FX or FL model by April 30, 1987, participating Harley dealers will allow \$3,995 trade-in value. For motorcyclists who don't own an 883, but purchase one from a participating dealer before July 31, 1987, Harley-Davidson guarantees \$3,995 if traded for a new FX or FL within two years of the purchase date."

There are some contingencies and disclaimers but if you've always wanted that low slung cruiser to complement your fire-breathing Nortons, head on down to your local participating Harley dealer and say hi. While you're there tell them about your favorite touring road. You might eventually win a book or some Harley touring gear which, if strapped to your Norton on a club ride, might just give the rest of us a good giggle.

*****Travel to Auburn, Mass. for the June 7th Ninth Annual British Motorcycle Meet and while you're there catch the auction of what's left of People's Motorcycles and Salvage Co. (Newton, Mass.) That'll be Triumph, BSA, and Norton stuff. Let's see, a truck rental at

Alan

SEND RENEWALS TO ALAN

Thanks to CYCLE for permission to reprint the following and thanks to club member Shane Harvey for typing it up!

"Threading the Needle on a Norton Interstate"

by Frank Conner (From May 1972 CYCLE)
edited

Norton Villiers lives in North Long Beach, a suburb of a suburb of Los Angeles. The company inhabits a big old ugly building that may have been an aircraft hangar in a previous incarnation, or perhaps it simply began life as an eccentric warehouse. But the motorcycle standing in front of the building was handsome. It was a Norton Interstate, and I was borrowing it for a ride up to San Francisco and back.

You have to hand it to the Norton designers. They bent fiberglass (on later production models, steel) around 6.3 gallons of gasoline, and the result came out looking better than a lot of three-and-a-half-gallon fuel tanks around. The machine was painted black, with nothing else on the tank but gold striping and the name "Norton."

The 750cc Interstate looked to be about the size of an average 650 - small enough and light enough to be manageable. The front forks didn't appear to have much rake. I turned the handlebars from side to side, and there wasn't much trail - the tire contact-patch didn't move back and forth a great deal. The steering felt light and free. This particular bike was fitted with flat European handlebars, which could mean either that nobody had bothered to pull a current American-market production machine out of the crate for a test bike, or that the machine was a little swervy with American handlebars fitted to it, or that perhaps it just happened that way.

The motorcycle had been fitted with turn signals, a single disc Lockheed hydraulic front brake, and the Combat engine, which was tuned to deliver a claimed 65 hp - 5 more than the old engine. This engine had a compression ratio of 10:1 (9:1 used to be standard); a pair of 32mm Amal concentric carbs (as opposed to 30mm); a new oil filter; different cams; and reinforced crankcases.

I strapped my Cub Scout travel pack to the back of the saddle with bungee cords, strapped my helmet to my head, and prepared to start the motorcycle. I threw my 135 pounds down on the kickstarter lever. Nothing moved. The Norton mechanic and I looked at each other, embarrassed. The rest-rider is always supposed to be able to start the engine, it says somewhere. On the second try I got the kickstarter lever to move down a few inches. Six kicks and a cupful of sweat later the engine was running. I was to find that when the engine was warm, I could always fire it on the first kick. But cold... six kicks and a cupful of sweat. There have been only two times in my life when I wished I weighed 180 pounds: at 2:00 A.M. one morning in a bad, bad part of New Orleans; and whenever I had to start this Norton cold.

I took off in traffic, looking for a freeway and repeating a little verse in my mind: "Brake on the left, shift on the right, up for low," like the ship's captain who locked himself in his cabin every morning, opened the safe, and studied a piece of paper that said, "The left side of the ship is called 'port'; the right side is called 'starboard'."

Shifting gears in the Norton was a lot of fun. You'd just yank the clutch, wiggle your right foot once, dump the clutch, and presto! you were in another gear. The shift lever had a short throw, and it made a nice little click to tell you that it had done its job.

(Continued on page 12)



WANT ADS

£



ALL ADS WILL RUN FOR TWO MONTHS UNLESS YOU RESUBMIT THEM IN WRITING TO THE EDITOR.

FOR SALE

Tired of sitting on a cold concrete floor? Now you can rebuild your Norton gearbox, do a valve job, or just polish the hell out of your primary case in the comfort of your favorite easy chair (well almost). How, may you ask? Just by buying my pneumatic motorcycle lift. It lifts your Norton to a comfortable working position with just your home compressor (You all have one of those, don't you?) It measures 2' X 9' and is semi portable (no wheels). Only \$50. while my supply (one) lasts.

Tom Keeble
(415)969-0668

FOR SALE

1. Production racer solo seat. \$35.
2. Connecting rods, exc. ea. \$20.
3. Clutch basket, lots. \$15.
4. Bronze clutch plates, set. \$45.
5. Grab rail w/clamps. \$20.
6. Cilpons, pair, new. \$25.
7. Alternator stators. \$20.
8. P-11 engine less head. \$85.
9. Lucas rebuilt twin lead magneto. \$75.
10. 750 head, exc. \$85.
11. Orig. factory Commando Shop Manual. \$15.
12. 850 frame w/disc front end, straight. \$145.

I have the following bikes for sale that are all in exc. shape but need a little work. If you're seriously interested in one, I'll work on it first. Prices shown are what I'll ask for the finished mint bike:

1. 1970 Dunstall LoBoy Racer #235, 75hp, 750 w/dual discs, 531 frame, etc. Never down, never raced. Like Dave Neal's racer. \$2,500.
2. 1971 Norton 750 Fastback. Red w/alloys and disc. Mint. \$1,250.
3. 1979 Benelli Sei, six cyl, mint w/5K orig. miles. \$1,875.
4. 1974 Moto Guzzi V7-Sport 750, exc. \$1,975.
5. 940cc Norton w/every part for maintenance to look ever invented for Commandos. It's fun to wheelie out of 2nd gear corners near the top of Mt. Hamilton. \$1,875.

Harvey Loucks
(408)255-7356
Best time is between
7 and 10 P.M.

FOR SALE OR TRADE

1. MKIII bottom end, rebuilt. \$ or trade for MKII bottom end.
2. MKIII primary covers--inner/outer. \$ or trade for ?
3. MKIII inner/outer gearbox covers. \$ or trade for MKII covers.
4. MKIII rear disk assembly, complete. Trade for Std. MKII rear assembly plus \$

Chris Nichols
(415)965-4611

FOR SALE

1. 1973 850 frame, straight. \$100.
2. Fork sliders for disc brake, complete with dampers, etc. Also comes with caliper, master cylinder, brake hose. \$75.
3. 850 triple clamps (pair). \$30.
4. 850 wiring harness complete. Includes capacitor, rectifier, ign. switch and headlight complete. \$75.

WANTED

Any Norton engines, complete or dismantled.

Phil Radford
(408)292-6563
Morns and wknds only



NORTON



LETTERS

HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

To the many members who should now be planning how to spend their money and time this summer, here's my advice: go to England. I spent two weeks there last year with my very tolerant wife and had many Brit. Bike religious experiences.

On an incredibly rainy day we visited the National Motorcycle Museum. Great Britain impresses the visitor as one big museum reveling in past glories, but the NMM is honestly one of the most interesting. Bikes are well displayed. On the walls hang huge blow-ups of photos from personal collections depicting some of the best and worst times of British motorcycling. If these pictures are ever available in a book, buy it. After seeing the spectacular collection of beautifully restored machines (including Rem Fowler's 1907 TT winner, many prototypes, and designer's wet dreams), this enthusiast left the display area, as everyone probably does, asking himself the Big Question: What happened? How was all this lost? Well, just inside the gift shop are not one or two dozen but whole CASES of Bert Hopwood's Whatever Happened to the British Motorcycle Industry?, one of which I dutifully bought. If you haven't read this depressing, maddening, yet perceptive insider's account of the rise and fall of the Empire, do it and consider sending a copy to the Board of General Motors. Recalling the gory details must have been a cathartic experience for Mr. Hopwood and we are forever in his debt for sharing it.

Our next stop was Fair Spares which is truly the hole-in-the-wall that Scot described (Would he lie?). They were out of some parts I needed, as always, so they called the Norton factory to see if any were available. After several attempts-- Fair Spares claims the factory won't answer the phone during tea-- they located the parts and we were given directions (in a manner of speaking) to collect them. I want to pause here to state that I am an ordinary guy, not a club officer or other dignitary, not unusually knowledgeable about Nortons, yet the following happened to me:

Many people were on vacation at the factory and we were met by the Assistant Parts Guy who said, "You've come so far, I suppose you'd like to tour the place." The British are famous for understatement, you know. So, after I composed myself and changed my underwear, I said, "Sure." The factory is not very big but appears well organized and clean. My wife, the Cal/OSHA Inspector, approved. One section is dedicated to Commando parts, most of which are made elsewhere. Another section is for the rotary bike. They were producing about three/day on one shift in an unhurried, hand-crafted fashion. Our guide was very proud of the technology and QC, insisting I fondle parts and hold and caress the steel box-frame backbone of what would become a purring machine. Most of the floor space is for production of rotary engines for military use where the compactness is ideal for small space applications. A single water-cooled rotor is the size of a large aluminum hockey puck.

Both the water and air-cooled versions of the motor have been fitted to bikes. Our guide implied that the water-cooled engine made a better motorcycle but this design had not yet reached production. When I raised the issue of Nortons For The People he clammed up and looked like he had been threatened with years of forced labor if he ever divulged

the company's intent. So, the eventual availability of rotaries remains a mystery. Would you believe a Norton ultralight aircraft which has actually been flown ("he was bloody crazy, 'e was")? How about a four-rotor Norton car? Well, I told him I wouldn't leak company secrets, so no more. Factory people ride the rotary bikes regularly and were coming and going during our visit. My wife took two pictures of me in front of the factory with rotaries in the background and both were lost in processing, proof of a malevolent diety.

We spent the rest of our vacation staying in farmhouses, living in pubs, and rambling around the countryside. Using the British Tourist Agency to find accommodations was easy and cheap. The farmers always knew the best pubs to eat in. Contrary to popular belief, English food is quite good if you know where to go, although the English breakfast is a quick ticket to a coronary. You won't see many British bikes on the road, and the ones you do spot can be odd ones. Locally brewed ales are great. Driving on British roads can be terrifying, although I highly recommend seeing Britain by some sort of vehicle. Anyone you meet who knows what a Norton is will be thrilled to talk with you about it, after a proper introduction or appropriate period of standoffishness, of course. I met a gentleman in a restaurant who had helped his brother rebuild an Inter in an upstairs bedroom and later lowered it to the ground by a rope. Supposedly, this bike is now in the NMM.

Jeff Jones
(415)763-1788



SECRETARY'S REPORT

2/12/87

Membership attrition has leveled off somewhat. We had 3 new members in January against 5 dnr's. Current membership is 192 full members and 6 subscribing members. We also send 13 complimentary subs to other clubs and club benefactors.

The club treasury balance is currently \$939.23, after sending February renewals to the UK and paying for the February newsletter. I will be ordering new business cards and club stationery printed this month and expect to spend about \$100.00.

The installation of club membership info as a computer data base is about 2/3 finished, so I should be ready to do a directory around April, in time for the riding season.

Alan



SPARES NEWS FROM ART

As most of you may already know, Fair Spares in England have a lot more items for sale than they list in their catalogue. One of the things I recently purchased from them was a very high quality set of Whitworth open-end spanners for £29. These wrenches come with a very neat holder and are made in West Germany. Fair Spares also offers valanced alloy rims made by Akront for your Norton for about £28. If you do decide to order rims, be sure to tell exactly which year and model Norton you have and whether you have disc or drum brakes.

I recently ordered stainless rearsets from RGM Motors. What a disappointment. Don't send for these unless you have a machine shop set up in your garage. Nothing fit correctly and one very important piece was missing. I have written to RGM Motors repeatedly concerning the missing piece and all I ever heard from them was a note saying that I would be receiving it "v. soon." That was 30 weeks ago! I have finally figured out that I am never going to see that missing part (It's the piece that clamps on to the splined shaft coming out of the gearbox and connects to the rod going back to the rearsets.). Also, that rod was 1 1/2" too long; the mounting holes on both support plates were drilled incorrectly, the brake lever was binding due to a lump of metal that had to be filed down, and the shifting lever had to be extended by 1 1/2" so that the rider's right foot could reach it. What a mess! Now that I think about it, the whole thing would have fit perfectly on a 1964 Zundapp!!

Art Sirota

NEW PARTS LIST FOR TRAVELERS

Italian NOTICE correspondent Ricardo Rutter has assembled a parts list for Norton travelers who wish to trek their Production Racers to the sunny shores of Italia. Space permits only a partial listing of information every Norton owner will want to have at the tip of his tongue.

*Dall'aspetto aggressivo e potente, questa Norton costruita dalla Norton Villiers.

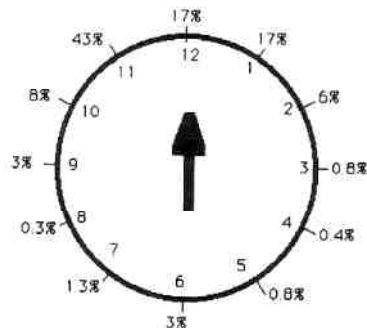
- + Motore-----2 Cilindri, 4 Tempi
- + 2 carburatori, 32mm senza Filtro aria aste e bilancieri
- + Compressore-----10.25
- + Alternatore a Batteria e Bobina-----Fornisce l'elettricità
- + Giri Massimo-----7400
- + Potenza-----70 cavalli a 6500 giri
- + Frizione-----multidisco con diaframma tipo auto
- + Accensione Elettronica-----Boyer e Lucas
- + Allessaggio e Corsa-----73 X 89

Interested travelers can contact Ricardo at his Potenza address: Signor Ricardo Rutter, 45 Via Bologna, Potenza, Italia. Make sure to enclose a SASE and your arrival date at his villa

SAFE DRIVING REMINDERS

Dairyland Insurance Co. publishes a short pamphlet summarizing safe riding practices. Herewith a digest:

1. Wear a helmet. "Of 3,600 accidents studied [the Hurt Report], over 3/4 of the fatally injured motorcycle riders were not wearing a helmet. And only one helmeted rider died of injuries." nuff said. Burton....
 2. Wear the proper clothing
 3. Be colorful. While Norton riders already are, reflective tape can add a measure of safety.
 4. The 2 second test: "... keep plenty of space between you and the vehicle in front of you." Allow 2 seconds [more at higher speeds] between you and the traffic ahead of you.
 5. Be a defensive rider.
 - a. With headlight on
 - b. Slow down at intersections
 - c. Watch for turning vehicles
 - d. Stay out of drivers' blind spots
 - e. Signal well in advance of any change in your driving pattern.
 - f. Use your horn
 - g. Don't assume a driver sees you, even if eye contact is made.
 6. Be alert. Over 75% of motorcycle accidents happen during the day on straight roads, in good weather. And over 80% of them happen within the first 18 minutes of the ride.
 7. No booze or drugs
- Be aware that 77% of motorcycle accidents occur between a visual clock of 11:00 and 1:00 o'clock (see below).



POSITION OF OTHER VEHICLE JUST BEFORE ACCIDENT

Send renewals to Alan



NORTON TAKEOVER

Showroom sales next year

NORTON have been earmarked for takeover by a property company, who aim to launch the long-awaited showroom version of the rotary superbike next year.

The £1.64m deal is expecting the stamp of approval from the property company's shareholders within the next two months.

The buying company already bear the Norton Villiers Triumph name following an earlier share deal, but have no connection with Manganese Bronze, the existing owners.

Philippe Le Roux, managing director of the property group and mastermind behind the takeover deal, promised the launch of a new civilian version of the Wankel-engined Norton "within 18 months."

The new bike will be a water-cooled version of the air-cooled 800cc machine already sold to the police and military.

"We have bought the company with the express intention of putting the rotary engine motor cycle into civilian production," said Mr Le Roux.

The motor cycle is already quite well developed. That has not been the problem, I think it has been more a question of commitment.

"The bike will be available to the civilian market in the middle of next year. By the second year we aim to be producing 2000 bikes a year."

NORTON RIDES AGAINI MAYBE . . .

An alert Jon Bashor spotted this Reuter's release in the Sacramento Bee (Jan., 1987):

Britain's Norton motorcycle is coming back

LONDON-- The Norton, one of Britain's best-known motorcycles before it was run off the road by Japanese competitors, is going to attempt a comeback.

Entrepreneur Philippe Le Roux says he plans to put a version of the rotary-engined Norton Interpol used by the British police forces on sale to the public. The lightweight 130-miles per hour machine will be priced at around 4,500 pounds (\$6,300).

Le Roux also wants to revive the Norton Commando, one of the last models of a line stemming from the Manx Norton racing machine of the 1950s. An estimated 90,000 Commandos exist around the world and spare parts for them are still available.

Japanese models accounted for most of the 104,000 motorcycles sold in Britain last year. Japan devastated Britain's motorcycle industry in the 1960s with a string of lightweight, high-revving machines, although the Norton's roadholding qualities were legendary among British riders.

WILL YOU KNOW WHAT THESE LETTERS AND NUMBERS MEAN IN THE YEAR 2000?

**LOOK!!!
AVAILABLE
NOW FROM
STOCK**

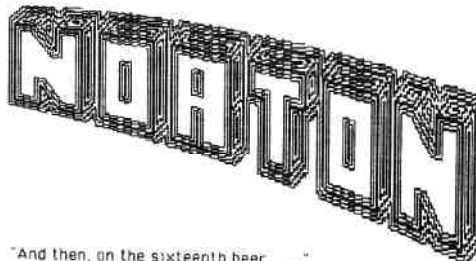
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- GSX550ESG
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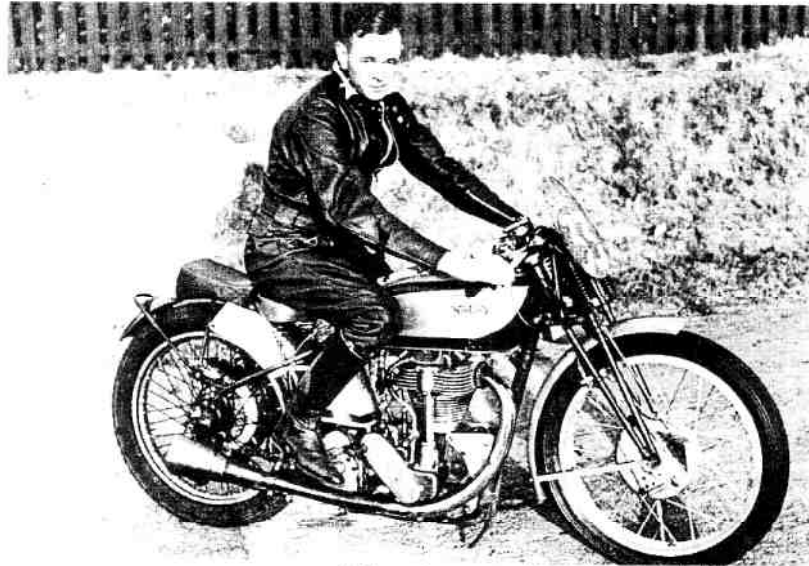
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"And then, on the sixteenth beer . . ."



Art was glancing through some old files and came across this photo of Johnny Lockett astride a 1939 gardengate with girders and airscoop front brake. Lockett rode the Isle of Man between 1936 and 1951 and was a team member on all the five successive occasions when Nortons gained the Manufacturers' Award (1949, '50, and '51).

COMMANDO WILL SPEARHEAD 'NEW' NORTON REVIVAL

No 1624 Wednesday January 21 1987 48p

MotorCycle News

NORTON'S new owners aim to put the legendary 750/850 Commando back into production while developing the new rotary engined superbike.

Relaunch of a "limited number" of Commandos was talked of last year when the price was expected to be about £5000.

Now the project has been picked up by new owners who have described it as being high on their priority list.

"We intend to have the Commando on sale by the end of the year," said

Philippe Le Roux, managing director of the Norton Villiers Triumph property group.

"We are talking about making a couple of hundred maximum. It is not really possible for me to quote a price at this stage but the response to the idea when it was first revealed last year was very good. Some people even sent in cheques."

The project has sprung from the lucrative Norton spares business run from the factory in Shenstone, Staffs. Both the Commando and Wankel will

be developed at the factory which now employs 60 people.

Staff is expected to grow to 100 over the next 18 months when over £2 million is to be invested in Norton's comeback.

"I have been to the factory several times and been very impressed with the quality of the technology and work that is being done there," said Mr Le Roux.

The Morgan Nicholls property group took on the name of Norton Villiers Triumph last year in a separate share deal but didn't think of moving into motor cycle manufacture until they

approached Manganese Bronze with a view to acquiring more famous motor cycling names for use in other businesses.

The takeover deal involves the transfer to Manganese Bronze of the three properties worth £1.64 million.

"This acquisition is the first step in the group's policy of investing into under-exploited situations of very high promise," said Mr Le Roux.

Aim is to continue developing the Wankel engine for a variety of uses including marine, aircraft and industrial

applications.

Manganese Bronze have already invested about £10 million in the development of the motor which began life on BSA drawing boards more than 10 years ago.

Despite the stop-go history of the project Mr Le Roux is confident its technology advantages over conventional piston engines will make it a sure fire winner with motor cyclists.

"We are not trying to rebuild an industry," he stressed. "The motor cycle market is not as strong as it was some years ago but sales at the top end

of the market have held up better than the rest and it is at the top end of the market the rotary is aimed.

"We have a totally different product to offer. The rotary engine has some considerable advantages, including lack of vibration and lightness, which will I am sure appeal to many motor cyclists."

Dennis Austin, managing director of Norton Motors, has agreed to continue to head the motor cycle operations under its new ownership which is expected to be finalised at the end of February or the beginning of March.



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

The engine is blessed with a wide powerband. It would come on hard at about 3500 rpm and accelerate away to the redline at 7000. Low gear was taller than on most other four-speed touring bikes. I liked that. The engine had enough low-end torque, and there was enough flywheel effect, and the clutch came in gradually enough, so you didn't have to worry about stalling the machine when it was time to start moving. And you could ride at the speed limit in most small towns using low gear, with some revs left over. The other touring-bike approach is to put low gear way down in the basement, usually causing a gap between low and second- the result is that you have to ride through towns with the engine screaming in low gear or almost stalled out in second. Not the Norton. And there were no gaps anywhere else in its gearing; there was plenty of overlap from one ratio to the next, which made for fast, easy upshifting and downshifting. I enjoyed riding the Interstate in traffic, except when braking.

The front-brake lever didn't have any travel to speak of. You just squeezed it like the handle of a test-your-strength machine in a penny arcade; the harder you squeezed, the faster the bike would slow down. The brake worked well, and I didn't find it dangerous. But it was disconcerting although I used the brake hard many times during the trip. I always gave it my full attention while I was squeezing.

Aha! Up ahead was a freeway on-ramp. I peeled off into it all healed over, and the bike felt good. I revved it hard in second and craned my neck to see which Peterbilt on the freeway was taking aim. Seeing an opening in the stream of hurtling vehicles, I yanked the clutch, popped the shift lever up into third, dumped the clutch, and turned on the throttle. Guess what. The tach needle went outstaged, the rear wheel made frantic sideways dancing motions, and the bike slowed down like it was attached to the statue of liberty. I had downshifted into low. "Brake on the left; shift on the right, up for low." I was on the freeway going 30 mph. An air horn went off right behind me, reminding me that you don't do that on Los Angeles freeways- not if you value your hide- so I grabbed a handful of throttle while thinking of Norton's by-now unique shift pattern and my short memory.

Next test: grooved concrete on the San Diego freeway. Haaa! The Norton, with its 4.10 x 19 tires front and rear, just breezed along on the grooves, wiggling ever so slightly where the groove-machine operator had gotten the hiccups. I soon relaxed, resting all of my butt on the saddle, and I forgave the Norton its shift pattern.

The Pacific Coast Highway, heading north. The beaches at Santa Monica, Topanga, and Malibu were almost deserted- maybe that was because it was early February right then. The traffic lights through there were few and far between, but what ones there were were always red when I got to them. And the disc front brake had started making a racket whenever I used it. In fact, it would squeal like a sloop at mealtime. That was embarrassing. You're riding along sooo smoothly and competently and effortlessly, and you get ready to stop for a traffic light, and the bike starts shrieking, and the people in their cars look at you funny. Do you really know what you're doing? Is that thing gonna fall apart right in front of my car? It was the same kind of feeling you get when you're downtown, and you're putting your big fast expensive shiny superbike on its centerstand, and you slip and let the machine fall over on its side.

I reached the other side of Malibu, and North Malibu, and North North Malibu, and finally there were low hills on my right, the blue (that day) Pacific on my left, and open road ahead. I took the bike up to 70 mph, which was just comfortably into the powerband in fourth gear. There was almost no vibration at all. This Norton was the most vibrationless touring machine I had ever

ridden, that means smoother than the BMW, the H-D 74, the Guzzi, the Honda CB-750, and the Suzuki water-cooled. Oh, yeah, the engine was shaking and quivering like any other verticle twin- I could touch my boot to the engine case and feel the blur. But Norton's isotastic shock mounts (Bob Trigg's highly successful answer to the Lord mount), which connect the engine/gearbox/swingarm to the rest of the bike, really kill the shakes. Dead. Just perfect for touring.

With the flat handlebars, I was sitting in a crouch, choking up on the front part of the saddle. On this machine, the footpegs were arranged so that I was balanced pretty well. The wind blast kept my weight off my arms so that I could rest my hands lightly on the bars. That was good; otherwise, small relative motions between me and motorcycle would have kept me speeding up and slowing down jerkily. From 4500 rpm up, the Norton's throttle response was so sensitive and so quick that it felt like the throttle was attached to the rear wheel.

I didn't have to exert much pressure to rotate the twistgrip, it only had to deal with two carburetors, and the spring pressure was light. That makes a big difference on a touring machine, too. I used to have to sit almost sidesaddle on a CB-750 just to get some leverage.

This side of Point Mugu I decided to cut across to Camarillo, so as to avoid winding through Oxnard. I was on a busy two-lane road passing through a huge flat valley of farmlands, when the sidewinds hit me. These weren't everyday old sidewinds; they were high-velocity gusts and chunks of air. The poor Norton just didn't know what to do about that. I had to rejoin Highway 101 for awhile, and the Interstate managed its winds better. They were still heavy, and they were still gusting, but they were the normal kind, and the Norton didn't mind them.

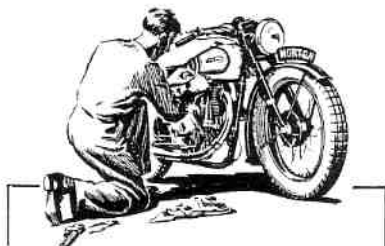
At Rincon I ran into most of the serious surfers in this part of Southern California. Pulling off the road, I parked the bike and sat on the hillside, watching them taking off for long rides on the shore-breaking waves. While I was studying the action in the ocean, a group of wetsuited surfers were just as busy checking out the Norton. You always want what you can't have. I can carry a wetsuit and fins on bike with no hassle, but if they've invented a surfboard you can carry on your motorcycle along with your other stuff, I don't know about it. I spent a long, long time sitting on that hillside, and then I fired up the bike again, heading for Santa Barbara.

On the two-lane road climbing the Santa Ynez mountains, the curves said "35 mph" and were good for about twice that. Third gear. I found myself leaning forward on the bike, halfway into a tuck, using reverse luck on the bars to tilt the bike. Oh, did it corner nicely! Really precise lines. And it was a very openminded machine. If I wanted to brake hard while leaned over going into a corner, that was okay with the Norton. If I wanted to change my line, that was perfectly all right too. So much for my worries about squirreliness. The Norton and I were fast making friends.

I pulled off on a side road with a whole series of slow S bends. No problem. You could throw the bike into one leg of the S, pick it up, and dump it right down into the other leg. No need to set up for the corners. I used the gearbox a lot, because I needed to and because it was so easy to use. Just blip it and downshift while braking, and you're right back in the powerband again.

Riding back up to San Marcos Pass, I charged the road again, but when I got to the pass, there was Santa Barbara and a good-size chunk of the Pacific, all spread out below me, a long way down and a long way off. I idled back down the mountainside, absorbing the spectacular view while angry pickup trucks passed me whenever they could on the short straightaways.

(To be continued next issue)



TECH TIPS

SERVICE RELEASE

Sept. 1971

No. N62

Damage to oil pipe by chafing

Commando 1971 (all models)

Worldwide (Trade Only)

Oil pipes, 062201 (Feed) 062200 (Return)

If contact should occur between the oil feed and return pipes and various cycle parts, there is a possibility of oil loss if the pipes should be rubbed through. To counter this, we are repositioning the pipes and also introducing re-inforced pipes which have a much greater resistance to damage. The same oil pipe numbers continue and future spares supplies will be of the later type.

Examine the oil pipes carefully for evidence of fouling and reposition as required. The points of foul which should be checked are:

- a) Between the rear fender and the point where the metal oil return pipe enters the flexible pipe behind the oil tank.
- b) At the sharp edge of the machined face where the oil tank strainer union abuts to the rear of the tank.
- c) At the horn. (On later models the oil pipe clip is re-formed to hold the pipes clear of the horn). Should the horn slacken on its mountings, this can result in further fouling. To re-secure the horn, remove the rear fender to gain access. Check that the centre bolt does not bottom in the casting and shorten if necessary before retightening.
- d) At the front of the right frame gusset plate adjacent to the rear engine mounting.
- e) At the front of the battery tray.

If the pipes show signs of wear as a result of fouling, replace with the later re-inforced oil pipe.

EXHAUST PIPE SPRING PULLER

(Mike Capalite in the Sept., 1976 issue of CYCLE GUIDE comes through again.)

Spring-loaded exhaust pipes have become extremely popular in motocross racing circles. With a spring-loaded pipe, vibration won't cause a structural fatigue failure of the exhaust pipe mounting brackets.

Removing such an exhaust pipe, though, can be a little tricky-- unless you have one of those fancy spring removers on the market. The spring removers look like miniature cotton bale hooks, with a small hook on one end and a handle on the other. If you have tried to remove one of these exhaust pipes without the spring tool, you probably used a pair of pliers and found that it constantly slipped off the spring.

A nice, easy, inexpensive substitute for a spring puller is an old spoke, either motorcycle or bicycle. Take a short piece of broom handle or other type of wooden dowel and drill a hole in the middle of it the size of the spoke you are going to use. Slip the spoke through the hole, secure it with the spoke nipple, and you have a perfect spring puller. All you have to do is hook the bent nipple end around the spring and pull-- the spring will come off easily.

TECH TIP: REMOVING BROKEN STUDS AND BOLTS

(The following appeared in the Nov., 1970 issue of CYCLE GUIDE)

I don't believe there is a mechanic who has not broken off a bolt or stud in an engine and had to take it out with an "easy out". This is not a hard job and it requires a minimum of tools, one of which is a drill. Of course if the stud or bolt is broken off above the surface where it can be gripped with pliers or vise-grips and removed, it is no problem. When it has broken off below the surface is when most home mechanics have problems. As it is never a clean, even, smooth break, the rider has a problem in starting the drill directly in the center of the broken stud. As the "easy-out" forces its biting edges outward to get a bit against the outside edge of the drilled hole, if the hole is off-center, it will bite into the threads holding the stud and you will be shoveling sand against the tide.

If a small propane torch or a good soldering iron is used, the hole can be filled with solder. With the hole filled with solder, it is no problem to centerpunch it and drill it correctly. In a case where solder would not be appropriate (like on the bottom of the engine; solder doesn't run uphill too well) a small wooden dowel can be tapped into the hole and the drill started in the dowel.





RIDE REPORT

B-2 Sunday, February 15, 1987

Downpour might last all day

An inch of rain to fall throughout Bay Area

FLYING NORTONS

I watched Phil eat his third helping. Such a mild-mannered guy I thought, yet here was clear evidence of a wild, animal psyche surfacing to attack yet another Swedish meatball. Overhead, a variety of model airplanes lazily strolled by. Over by the buffet Alan was jostling and eventually outmaneuvering a mother with her small child. He speared some pickled beets and snatched some sprouts and returned triumphantly to our table. "See, no need to wait." Harvey took another sip of champagne and grew rosier. The band played louder.

The day had started for me in sunshine but the weatherman had predicted the worst. With the promise of another look at Ed Brooks' collection in San Jose, I bundled raingear and camera together, opted for a fairing, and slipped up my muddy driveway to the street. Once on the freeway, in light traffic, I settled in for the hour ride. It occurred to me that most accidents occur in the first eighteen minutes of riding because it takes (me, anyway) at least twenty minutes to squish the saddle just right, stretch the arms and legs just right, and reacquaint the mind to the "feel" of the bike; the brakes, the motor, the trans, the tires. I was passed by a Ninja, the unlucky fellow was nabbed about five minutes later. He was the only other bike I saw in either direction until I hit Rabers. Some light rain threatened here and there but I was committed.

Bob Raber had his shop open with coffee and doughnuts waiting. Ed Brooks was gracious enough to show us around. They're reorganizing an immense space and it's going to be spectacular when it's done. For the moment Ed's collection is packed in several rooms but we were able to wander around and through the aisles to see the bikes. Chris Nichols went into shock at the sight of all the goodies and had to be revived by a sympathetic but also drooling Don Danmeier. Ed is apparently leaning more toward old Harleys and Indians these days but the number and variety of old British iron is noteworthy. And some had zero miles. I personally witnessed a kneeling Lyn Scott saying barely audible prayers to a brand new Commando.

We exited and found that Mark Welsendanger had tried to join the ride the hard way. His racer, equipped for the street during the off season, blew its rear tire on the freeway

and Mark went down. Several pickups stopped quickly and assisted him and his bike to Rabers. He was fine but his primary case was sporting a new hole and several parts were dangling here and there. Friends stayed to help him call the remains home.

Meanwhile, Harvey was dashing in and out of the store shaking his fist at the sky. Even though Alan had worn his raingear, we endured a short downpour with much apprehension. The wait was over in fifteen minutes or so and, happily, that was IT for the day. Incredible!

Our ride to Morgan Hill was a short one. Harvey later said he was glad I was leading so that he wouldn't be accused of wrong turns. But Harv, I come from the 'it-doesn't-matter-which-way-you-go-because-it's-all-fun-o two-wheels school. So, with the headlight aimed in the general direction of Morgan Hill, we took off on G8 to the Flying Lady.

Harvey sprang for two rounds and then "Norton, party of nine" was called to their table. We deposited our gear and made a mad dash for the food. Chris yelled, "Me first!" but Phil delivered a karate chop to his midsection which sent him sprawling over several tables. John Covell, standing behind Don, pinched Alan's ear and when Alan turned to confront his aggressor John quietly slipped ahead of the two of them. A fired-up Chris leaped back into the line and began pounding Phil's back but by this time Phil had snagged a carrot stick and was munching contentedly.

After brunch we wandered through one of the large airplane/car museums on the property. As we were preparing to leave I could sense that movement around us had stopped and when I focused on the bystanders I saw that we were at the center of everyone's attention. One by one the Nortons fired up. Old men watched with thin smiles and small tears in their eyes; women clutched their wide-eyed children. And then, with a mighty "Hi ho, 'O! Reliable" Harvey lead us off into the hills.

And YOU missed it! Shame.

Love

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