

Norton Notice

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH
NORTON OWNERS CLUB

NO., 108

APR., 1987



THEY WENT THATAWAY!





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 Spares Program.

On the cover: Two Nortons head out to Laguna to try their luck. 1986.

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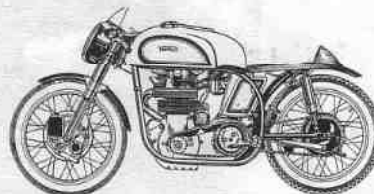
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NORTON OWNERS CLUB

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 motorcycling 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
**Apr. 9	Thurs.	*Branch meeting. Zuka's Restaurant, One Gilbert St. (across Bryant St. from the Hall of Justice at 7th & Bryant), SF, 7:30PM.
**Apr. 12	Sun.	*Gathering of JPN aficionados at Alice's, 9:30 AM.
**Apr. 19	Sun.	*Easter Morning Ride. Mean Marshall's jaunt up Mt. Tam. 80-100 of Europe's finest take to the roads at the ungodly hour of 4:00 AM. See article in this issue for details.
**Apr. 19	Sun.	*AFM races at Sears Point.
**Apr. 25-26	Sat.-Sun.	*Tulare Swap and Show Sat.; Sun. Poker run sponsored by BSA Club of So. Cal. and Vintage Cycle Magazine. The BIG ONE. Tulare County Fairgrounds.
**Apr. 26	Sun.	*4th Annual Rally of European Motorcycles. Rally, informal concours d'elegance, and poker run. Begin and end at the Monterey County Fairgrounds (Fairground Road and Airport Road). Reg/check-in at 7:30 AM., road course event starts at 9:00. \$8.00. Must wear helmet. Info (408)373-8197 (eves.). Sponsored by Monterey Bay European Motorcycle Club.
**May 2-3	Sat., Sun.	*Branch overnighter at Jerry Kaplan's. See details in this issue.
**May 9-10	Sat., Sun.	*AFM New Riders School and races (Sun.), Sears Point.
DOWN THE ROAD:		
May: Morro Bay overnighter (May 30-31)		
June: Don leads us through North Bay roads.		
July: Fourth of July Picnic and Beer Bust on the Santa Cruz beaches. July 11-12, Laguna Seca. July 21-26 INOA Rally, Durango, CO.		
August: Annual Club Rally, tentatively set for Grover Hot Springs.		



APRIL

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



TWISTGRIP TWADDLE

I have to wonder what will become of the Norton Owners Club if, as seems possible, the Norton Villiers Company resumes production of civilian motorcycles sometime in the next year or two. Think about it: What makes our club distinctive? No, not the Norton motorcycles. It is not machinery but people that make a club. So, what kind of person rides a British bike of arguably ancient design, not a red-hot performer by today's standards, frequently hard to obtain parts for, with P.O.D. electrics and a 19" rear wheel that none of the new flash tires will fit? Who dares to ride such a machine long distances?

He (or, yes, she) is, for starters, a bit of an iconoclast; one who is not content to ride something he's bound to see coming toward himself around every corner. To achieve individuality, the Norton owner is willing to put up with and prevail over the conditions cited in the preceding paragraph. He'll sacrifice flash for true beauty, preferring to be seen on what is arguably one of the most, if not the most, handsome two-wheelers ever produced anywhere. Simply to ride a Norton is to make a statement about oneself and one's values. It matters not that the Norton owner may have other machinery in his garage, perhaps from Italy or Japan; variety's the spice, and all that. But ask himself what is really the mount of choice, and the answer is quickly forthcoming. I suppose a good part of it is the pleasure of pulling up adjacent to another biker at a traffic light and knowing there's no need even to look at the other bike. A harmless, delicious arrogance, without the obnoxiousness that would entail if we were talking Harleys. ("Damn, I'm good!")

But what will happen if that wondrous rotary arrives on these shores, so that any dude with a pocket full of green can go down and ride one away? Some of us will get one, sure, but many will be bought by jaspers possessing few or none of the characteristics discussed above. Will they be excluded from the Norton Owners Club? Of course not, even if they could be. Xenophobia ill becomes the motorcycle connoisseur. Their support will be welcome, for good reasons.

The main reason is that, in addition to all the qualities mentioned, the NOC member is essentially a joiner: He or she wants not only to ride but to associate with others of similar tastes. Ideally, the NOC member also wants to contribute in a positive way to the vitality and momentum of the club. We have many such, and I regularly enjoy meeting, riding, drinking and swapping stories with them. I count them among the best people I've known. They/you nor I would see this unique mix radically change, and surely not because Norton Villiers begins making motorcycles again. So long as we are true to our own purposes for having a club, no worries. It's good and can only get better.

And here's the pitch: Involve yourself. Stay involved. Communicate. Know your machine. And ride safely, always.

Nort'nly yours,

John
Pres.

TECH TALK

Beginning with this issue, the NOTICE takes you on a tour of the world of the Norton Commando. Six knowledgeable, willing, and hungry Norton nuts gathered at the editor's palatial estate to swap tales and exchange tech tidbits. The session was tape recorded for use in the NOTICE. Members talked until tired, at which point we agreed that there was still a long way to go and that we needed another meeting. I have scheduled another session and hopefully we can bring you even more of the discussion through the NOTICE.

Briefly, the format of the meeting was to follow the typical sequence of chapters found in a repair manual-- the engine, primary drive and clutch, transmission, fuel system, etc. We more-or-less made it through the primary drive and clutch in about two hours.

I would like to thank those who were present. There was a good feeling at this meeting, not only because the individuals involved are easy to get along with (with the possible exception of Scot [and Harvey trying to offload even more motorcycles onto fresh clientele--PR]) but because they clearly respected one another's viewpoints. I was particularly gratified that they took the job seriously and that we were able to stay "on task." I believe all readers owe them thanks as their observations build our newsletter into the vehicle it should be-- that of a forum for ideas and tips from member to member.

Finally, there are bound to be questions left unanswered or even clouded by the method (transcribed tapes) we've used to bring the discussion to you (See comments which follow). If you are unclear about a point or wish elaboration you can write to the NOTICE. I will attempt to have the point in question clarified. Or, you may wish to add your comments-- send them in.

The participants individually edited the transcript to delete inaccuracies or to expand on points they made in the discussion. I have made an effort to reproduce the text as close to what was actually said as possible in order to preserve the spontaneity at the meeting. In some cases we have altered the text where voice inflections indicated a participant meant something other than what a reader might suppose the text says. There is frequently a problem with subtle (or no-so-subtle) humor in this regard; you hear the differences when you are listening at a meeting but can easily miss it if you read it somewhere. You can experience the problem yourself if you tape record a conversation

(Cont. p. 8a)

ISLE OF MAN SCHEDULE

May 25-29	Practice Week
May 30-June 5	Racing Week
July 13-15	Southern 100 Road Races (Castletown)
August 24-28	Manx GP Practice
August 29	Classic Manx GP
Sept. 1 & 3	Manx GP



EDITOR'S NOTES



ODDS AND ENDS

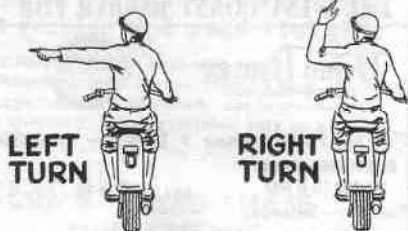
**** The IOM Tourist Board is negotiating with Rob Ianucci to bring three of his recently acquired four stroke racers to the Island this year. Ianucci reportedly won't allow his machinery to be raced against modern machinery but the Board may be able to convince him to run "demo" laps between races and race them in the Classic Manx GP on August 29. Proposed riders are Phil Read, Dave Roper, and Giacomo Agostini. Ianucci has said at MV bid time that he would actively campaign the machines if they fell into his possession. MV won 34 TTs and are headed in the TT success list only by Yamaha, Norton, and Honda.

****New K bike owners with idle tools will be happy to learn that Haynes is planning to release a manual on the four cylinder bike during the second half of the year.

****April's Branch meeting is at a restaurant used by the Northstars, Zuka's. There's a full bar and sandwiches are available from the kitchen. We'll have the dining room to ourselves and parking is available. John has tentatively arranged for Daniel Sul to speak and/or answer insurance questions so if you've been wondering why the other guy's rates are less than yours here's where to find out why.

****The Oakville Grade ride turned out to be a pleasant day. The four Nortons scored the majority victory and were chased around the countryside by a 750 Duc, 2 Triumphs, 1 Goldie, and a Black Shadow. The hills were green, the sun shone most of the day, and Margie's birthday cake was tasty. I got home at 4:30, just in time to finish digging a ditch. I should've stayed for that beer at Nick's Cove, fellas.

Lou



SPARES REMINDER

SNAP! The clutch lever went limp. And this was the first ride all week! And the sun was out! Oh, well, I thought, at least I'm prepared-- that spare clutch cable will just take a second to hook up.

Well, it didn't work out that way. Seems that the cable was too short and I hadn't noticed it when I bought it. After a bit of creative routing and adjustment I could just get the clutch to engage. I made it home but my piece of mind had been shattered.

I subsequently bought two new cables. When I fitted the first of the two cables to the bike I could not insert the cable end into the handlebar lever because of an excess of metal in the ball. I had to file it down before it would fit. I checked the second cable and it was the correct size.

Two out of three cables did not do the job. 'nuff said?

MORAL: Never leave home without checking that your spares will do the job. And to all of you who ride without a centerstand-- have you actually tried to patch a tire without help? I think I'd better practice. Any ideas?

Lou

WHEEL PROBLEMS?

One of the speciality shops in the Bay Area that doesn't get much notice is Chris Quinn's Wheelworks in Hayward. I had some questions about tires and wheels and dropped in on Chris recently to chat. Chris is an amiable fellow and spent considerable time with me offering advice and tips. It was a pleasure to meet someone who was willing to listen to the questions I had and who was able to offer a variety of solutions to the problems I presented. While I cannot vouch for the quality of his work, he has been in the business a long time and claims to be one of the few remaining wheel builders in California. If you are into a restoration or upgrading your rims give him a call. Chris has also been active in classic road racing for many years and can assist you if you're headed in that direction.

Wheelworks	Tues.-Fri. 3:30-10
1957 West Winton Ave.	Sat. 10:30-4:30
Hayward, CA 94545	Closed 5:30-7:30
(415)785-4396	

Lou

SEND RENEWALS TO ALAN



WANT ADS

E



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

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

**SPECTACULAR
OFFER!!**

BUY 1 GET 14 FREE!!

Here's the opportunity you've been waiting for, Norton fans. Buy the December, 1985 issue of the NORTON NOTICE and receive the next 14 issues absolutely free! 14 issues absolutely FREE!!! Send your check for \$10.00 made payable to the NORTON OWNERS CLUB c/o Alan and receive this wonderful gift.

Offer limited to the first five people to write in. Requests must be received by May 15, 1987. Postage/handling included. All proceeds to club treasury. Offer available only as a package deal.

**ACT NOW AND AMAZE
YOUR FRIENDS**

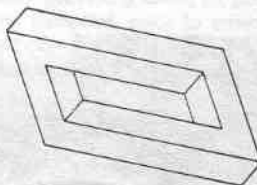
FOR SALE

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. Clipons, 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 performance trick 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.



Tech tip #111:
Check the frame for straightness.



LETTERS

REPAIR SHOPS WORTH NOTING

Thanks to Brian Reynolds of Yreka who writes: "There are two [British bike dealer/repair shops] that I'm sure are not on anybody's list ... and I would like you to have them. The first one, Verne Fueston's Good Things Enterprises ... I have had repair work done there, and Verne (besides being an excellent mechanic and a good friend of mine) is also a Brit bike fanatic. He is restoring two Nortons right now ... does custom work for his friend, the infamous "Axtel", in L.A. Floyd at Rogue Valley Cycle, I have bought parts from ... but has done no repair work for me. Anyway, here are the listings ... providing valuable information for someone who needs help ... I am unaware of any other shops that do this kind of work north of Sacramento, in interior Calif., at least.

Shop: Good Things Enterprises, Inc.
 Owner: Verne Fueston
 Address: 825 N. Main St., Yreka, CA 96097
 Phone: (916)842-6511
 Motorcycles serviced: All types, specialty in Brit bikes.
 Types of service: All types, from tune-up to major overhaul. Specializing in frame straightening. Sales of used bikes, all types.
 Spare parts availability: Pretty good. Some parts in stock. Avg. 2-day turnaround on most Norton parts.

Shop: Rogue Valley Cycle
 Owner: Floyd Young
 Address: 112 S. Pacific Highway, Talent, OR 97540
 Phone: (503)535-1242
 Types of motorcycles serviced: British only, specializing in Norton, BSA, Triumph.
 Types of service: All types, from tune-ups to major overhauls. Does not do much customizing work. Sales of used Brit bikes.
 Spare Parts availability: Good. Many mechanical parts in stock. 5-7 day turnaround on most Norton parts.



Final installment of "Threading the Needle on a Norton Interstate."

Back on Highway 101 again, there were white arrows painted on the four-lane road to show the direction you were supposed to be traveling. They were such beautiful arrows, with sharply-painted points. I'd play split-the-point with the middle of the front tire.

The Norton's suspension was firm. It would take the edge off bad bumps, but it would ignore the small ones, and it was useless on a stretch of road with raised expansion joints. bumpitybumpitybumpity...

But other than the stretch of expansion joints, I enjoyed the feel of the road texture that I got through the Norton. The most satisfying kind of road was asphalted rock aggregate.

Highway 101 swung inland at Gaviota, and the temperature dropped like a brick fifteen degrees; as far as I was concerned, I had hit Northern California (or it had hit me). The road made gentle sweeping turns as it climbed up and over the Santa Ynez mountains.

At San Luis Obispo I bought skiers longjohn underwear. Thus fortified, I turned off on the Pacific Coast Highway again and rode to Morro Bay. There a chain of sand dunes formed a breakwater that almost sealed off the bay. At the end of the dunes was gigantic Morro Rock, looking like a huge seamed pudding bowl of solid stone, standing guard at the entrance to the bay. An equally huge Pacific Gas and Electric power plant standing beside the rock spoiled the effect completely. It was about as subtle as a punch in the gut.

In a little town called Cambria I stopped to eat. I sat near the door of the cavernous restaurant, next to the end of a long, long counter. A bunch of highschool students sitting down at the other end were talking and eating. Then the front door opened, and the conversation stopped. A really cool-looking chick strolled in, carrying a year-old baby. She checked out all the action, and then headed toward my end of the counter. You know the kind of girl, she probably walked across France in '67; got teargassed in Chicago in '68; would never mention either incident unless you asked her directly; had been the whole route, and you couldn't faze her with a medium tank. She looked at the end seat (which didn't appear to have been occupied during the past ten years), smiled slightly, and said, "Is anybody sitting here?"

"Nope."
 She plonked the baby gently on the counter, whereupon it began to play with a napkin dispenser. Then she sat down. We were getting open stares from the high school students, who couldn't figure it out. Neither could I.

I said "I don't think you're a painter, I'd guess potter or photographer."

She laughed. "Computer programmer."
 "Oh." I was crushed.

She relented. "But I am also a photographer, and by husband's a painter, when he's not carpentering. He calls painting a disease, and he has to live in an area for a year before he can start painting it." I learned that her husband rides an antique Matchless, and they both read motorcycle magazines, so we talked bikes for awhile. Then I learned that she was in Cambria looking for a house, so we discussed the remarkable similarities between real estate agents and PR men (the difference being that real estate agents get rich), and we used up two whole hours in five minutes. Then she wandered across the street to a real estate agency, and I aimed the Norton toward San Simeon.

Then came the most exciting piece of road that I have ridden in the United States. For awhile the pavement meanders through rolling hills near the edge of the ocean. Here the water has torn away chunks of the

(Cont. p. 8a)

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land, and the surf rages at the exposed skeletons of big rocks; scattered here and there are little sheltered coves with sandy beaches.

And then the Santa Lucia mountains, which bulk directly against the Pacific. The road climbs and climbs, hanging way up there, carved into the mountainside, helplessly following every wrinkle and terrain contour of the cliffs. Way, way down below is the ocean: unbroken blue. But maybe four hundred yards out there will be swirls of white water, as the swells break on one lone massive rock whose tip barely reaches the surface of the water.

The road is narrow. Almost all the corners are blind. Sometimes the corner will keep a constant radius—at other times it may change abruptly, without warning. Smooth road, rough road. Corners from 30 to 70 mph, all mixed up together. The penalty for misjudging a corner and running off the road—wow!

You only catch little glimpses of blue water and green water, because you have to focus your entire attention upon the corner just ahead, which may contain an oncoming Porsche that wants to share your lane with you. On this road you rally find out what your motorcycle is all about. Handlebars, clutch, gearbox, brakes, twistgrip— you're using them all constantly. Mountain to the right of you, cliff on your left, blind corner ahead: 40 mph?; brake hard; downshift; lean it over— 40 mph?; yep (sigh); loose rock— move it over a little; accelerate; shift; another corner coming up; 30 mph?

On the return journey, the rains came. And there was fog so thick in places that traffic was going 30 mph on a four-lane highway. At other times there were hard, driving winds. For a long time I enjoyed it— the Norton didn't get slithering in the wet— but after awhile my cold wet feet began to congeal, and then the rest of my body joined in. Finally I got that numb, constricted feeling, like the world is closing in on you and you are losing control of your reflexes. It was night, and the Norton's headlight is nothing to brag about (like those of 98% of the rest of the motorcycles sold) even in clear weather. So at Santa Barbara— though I was only 80 miles out of Los Angeles— I pulled off and called it a night.

The next morning was warm and sunny, and I felt good. I rode along at 80 mph, weaving from side to side in my lane. Wanting to see how fast the bike would go, I opened it up. But apparently it was losing its lunge. Although it still performed perfectly at cruising speeds, I could only get 100 mph on the clock. Slowing down to the speed limit, I rode back to Santa Monica, parked the bike, patted it on the saddle, and went inside to put on my wetsuit. A ride like that limbers, loosens, relaxes, recharges. And the Coast Highway is definitely Norton territory.

For that matter, just about any highway is Norton territory. It handles like Nortons are supposed to handle, the front brake, squeak and all, is a vast improvement over last year's drum (even if you do have to have a hand that looks like Godzilla's to work it easily), and the black dude is smooth. The question at the outset is the Interstate just a superbike with a big gas tank? Or is it a legitimate tourer? Twelve hundred miles later: yes. A legitimate tourer. Nicer than most. And faster in acceleration than all of them.

with friends and then try and imagine how it would appear in print. But, as I mentioned, we have tried to clear up confusions while still retaining the sense of a conversation among a group of Norton nuts. Note that some of the participants' edited comments are enclosed in brackets with their initials.

The discussion followed dinner, where members ate control chickens donated by the UCAL Animal Research Facility at Berkeley, Kranzel potatoes specially prepared by a smiling and humming Burton Kranzel, and Birds Eye peas. Attendees consumed a variety of beverages and were remarkably helpful in passing one another hard-to-reach bottles. We retired to the recording studio to begin explorations into the mysteries of the Norton Commando.

MEMBER PROFILES

Alan Goldwater: Soft spoken, intense, former pipe smoker who bums cigarettes at every opportunity. Slight twitch in lower left lip, walks with a pronounced limp. Moderately hunchbacked. Frequently appears startled at the mention of the word "Indian."



Burton Kranzel: Short but powerful. Carries a finely honed trident. Constantly asking for phone books to sit on. Low flashpoint, quick to action. Has been stranded all over the country, unfortunately usually on his Norton. Avoided by civilians. (Cont. p.8b)

NORTON

STOP
OR
SLOW





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Harvey Loucks: Pleasant smile, some questions about his activities between 1970-81. Secret desire to be the fastest bartender on two wheels. Extensive experience with Nortons beginning with one acquired at age 13 when his father suggested he hop aboard one and keep going. Known to consume 17.5 8oz. glasses of wine in a quarter mile run aboard a 920 Nort.



Lee Steinmetz: An innocent bystander who is the lightest of the group. Known to eat chicken, peas, and mashed potatoes with fork and knife unlike other members of the group. A model citizen.

Lou Caputo: Fastest pen in the West when he can remember where he left it and when he can find paper. The only member present who can hit a 90mph serve on a tennis court-- a fact of which no member present was aware nor would probably have considered even remotely critical to anything.



Phil Radford: Thickly bearded, penetrating blue eyes. Still learning to speak English with encouragement from friends who understand the difficulties he faces. Still struggling to understand these crazy Americans but appears to be adapting well (and almost thriving) in a sunny climate.

HERBLOCK'S LAW:

If it's good, they discontinue it.

THE LAST LAW:

If several things that could have gone wrong have not gone wrong, it would have been ultimately beneficial for them to have gone wrong.

Scot Marburger: Secret ambition to be a plumber, punctuates his conversation with frequent references to "Jap shit." Seeking a female roommate before his bald spot makes romance an unlikely occurrence. May accept one of Alan's rejects if the price is right.



THE EQUIPMENT

Dual recording monitors: Sankyo Hi Tech Walla Walla quasar phones powered by a Sony 70 watt Hubba Hubba integrated amp; also, Sony Walkman WM-F17 which malfunctioned during the second half of the session due to the recording engineer's failure to push the record button.

Note: All belches, gasps, hiccups, and farts have been deleted from the transcript. Recording time before deletions was 135min 15 sec.; after deletions 87 min 12 sec.

OFF AND RUNNING!!!



Lou: For this meeting let's talk about modifications to the engine for increased reliability and also for increased performance although that may not be of as much interest to people.

Harvey: Well, yes, performance in the broader sense. In terms of improving the handling, making sure the power is always there.

Lou: Well, I'm thinking of the typical owner who is going to read this and maybe not race it.

Harvey: I think the emphasis has switched from, say, 10 years ago when I first got into Nortons. Back then they were the hottest street bike on the road in terms of all out performance, outrunning everything. The quarter mile times were great. I think today people ride Nortons because they are a little different, they like to work on their bikes a little bit, maybe they're less expensive. They're not like Hondas. I always think of Hondas and assholes together. Everybody has one. But Nortons aren't like that. You kind of have a pride in being a little different. And also your bike needs you. It's a high

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maintenance machine and you develop a rapport with it. Something goes wrong with your Honda and you don't know what the fuck to do.

Burton: Jeff Jones has a theory that Nortons are the embodiment of some kind of spirit. They really need to be around people.

Lou: Okay, but the average guy who owns a Norton isn't interested in polishing off a Honda because he knows he can't. He wants to get from here to there in one piece and reliably.

Harvey: I think what he wants to do is have a bike which is rid of the nagging problems that make it quit in the middle of Skyline. Just bring out the best in it and make the best always happen. There are changes you have to do to make that happen.

Lou: OK, I think that's exactly what most people are interested in. With that in mind can we start with the engine?

Burton: It's OK with me. I think, for example, we'd all agree that you'd want to fit the late valve guides that incorporate seals on the inlet guides. Also, I think you'd want to fit the eyeletted gasket and lower the compression ratio.

Phil: Well it's not a bad idea to lower the compression ratio but it's not achieved by fitting the flame ring gasket.

Burton: Relative to the gas situation it did make a difference. Once in Nebraska I got 94.5 octane gasoline and you can really see why when Norton gives out the specs they say it needs 95 octane gas. I went in this gas station on 91 octane and came out on 94.5 and it was like having a different motorcycle. So it does make a lot of difference.

Scot: Well, I'll vouch for that. I ran my bike on 4-star in England and from the first tankful it behaved like I'd always heard they should. It idled, it accelerated cleanly, it had more power, and it never knocked once, no matter how hard I loaded it. And when it came back here all the little problems came back.

Lou: Has anyone had any experience with octane boosters?

Phil: No, but I tell you what I have found. They've got a thing called Real Lead and it's real tetraethyl lead.

Scot: Is it pure or is it a mixture....

Phil: It's diluted tetraethyl. One can lasts 20 gallons. It's not a lead substitute, it's actually tetraethyl lead, which I didn't think was available. But it is. Right on the bottom of the can it says, "If used in California to be used in outboard motors only." It's expensive but hell, it's cheaper than a valve job. [It's a pretty good barbecue starter too--PR]

Burton: Well, with the copper head gasket you do effectively lower the compression ratio.

Harvey: I like the copper gasket too.

Phil: It doesn't need as much retorquing down and it conducts heat better from the head into the cylinder. The cylinder runs cooler and the temp of the head can be a little lower than with the flame ring composition gasket.

Scot: Sounds like a good theory but I've never noticed any difference with my cylinder head temp gauge. I'll tell you one thing I HAVE noticed; I usually retorque the head after each time I ride it because it's the thermal cycle which makes the head gasket need retorquing. I can go maybe two cycles and the torque values won't change any-- in other words the head gasket bolts won't turn-- with the copper gasket. With the flame ring it's three, maybe four times, you go through that and the gasket continuously gets flatter and needs to have that slack taken up. The copper gasket is a lot less hassle. As far as leaking around the pushrod tubes, which is the main problem I've had in replacing head gaskets, either one of them seems to last 10,000 or 15,000 miles.

Burton: Yeah, I've found the same.

Lou: What about under racing conditions? Have you noticed a difference?

Lee: I've never used a composition head gasket.

Harvey: They [copper--LC] won't blow out.

Lee: And I have reused them two or three times.

Harvey: Throw them on the stove, get them red hot, and toss them in cold water and they soften up.

Lee: They seem to weep a little from the pushrod tubes.

Burton: Everything does on a Norton.

Lee: But I haven't had any problems with them blowing out.

Harvey: What I've done is use a little RTV silicone seal around the pushrod tubes. Just smear it on really thin [Nasty shit if any gets loose in the engine--MR], not any kind of thickness-- almost wipe it off-- and then torque the thing down.

Phil: Harvey packs it around the pushrods.... stuffs it down those little holes....

Harvey: And that takes care of the weeping around the pushrod holes....

Burton: You have to place the gasket carefully, though, and make sure it's placed accurately, that the cutouts are accurate to the block.

Harvey: Some of them are pretty bad [I agree--MR].

Burton: They are and I brought a pair of pushrods with me which have a flat spot because I put the gasket on and ran the bike that way. When I took it apart I discovered the gasket wasn't cut right to the holes and the pushrod had been rubbing on the gasket.

Harvey: What do you guys do to keep the oil from weeping around the pushrod holes?



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Burton: Well, I haven't found any solution. The aluminum paint on the gasket seems to help. It really seems to make the gasket stick.

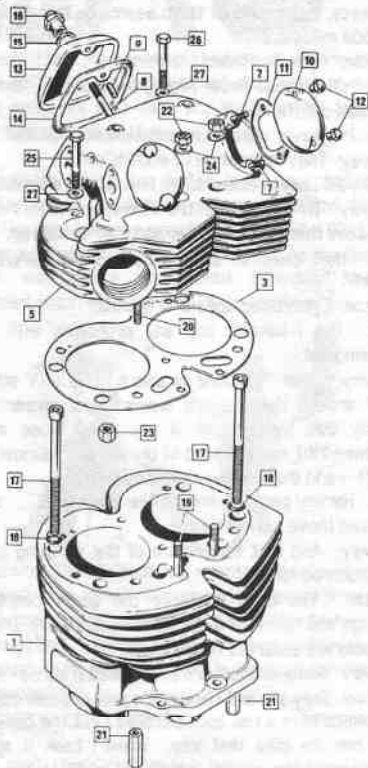
Harvey: Do you use any gasket sealer?

Burton: I tried copper gasket sealer and that didn't seem any better than the aluminum paint. It's hard to work with too because it's real gummy.

Scot: I've used that too. 15,000 miles and it'll start weeping.

Burton: But the trouble is, more than anything the gasket doesn't stay flat between those two front studs which are close together unless you go through the whole torquing sequence and a lot of people don't want to do that because they don't want to take off the head steady and the coil bracket or at least the coil bracket and whatever the hell is in the way up there. And you just can't get in there without it, and even then it's a pain in the ass.

Harvey: That's only a problem with the '75s with the spring.



Scot: With the right extensions and universal joints you can get in on every one.

Burton: I don't know-- I've tried.

Scot: You have to take the tank off.

Harvey: You can. You can torque them all down.

Burton: I've tried various combinations and I've never had any luck with the bottom ones for torquing them since the torque wrench won't fit.

Phil: Yeah, they will.

Burton: Not with my torque wrench. I took a couple of box wrenches and cut the ends off them and welded a socket to the end of the box wrench. It fits right in there, it's a nice clean fit.

Phil: You just get a long wrench on the bolt, and then the other end of the wrench is sticking out. Then you attach the torque wrench to that. As long as it's at a right angle....

Harvey: Or close.... it doesn't have to be exactly straight on.

Phil: It can't be dead on....

Scot: One click either way and you're still in good shape.

Harvey: Is it really the same torque, Scot?

Scot: As long as you're at a right angle it doesn't matter.

Alan: Well, it does matter a little. If you draw the triangle the hypotenuse of the triangle is going to be a little bit longer than the torque wrench handle.

Scot: No, it's not like that.

Alan: Yeah, it is.

Scot: If you apply a torque at one end of a beam and you react that torque at the other end and it reacts again at the nut...

Alan: No, it's purely the difference from the handle to the point where you're exerting the force. Draw the triangle and look at it - - it's a vector [Alan is right--MR].

Harvey: We should know this stuff, Scot.

Scot: It's been too many years.

Burton: Anyway, the retorquing of the head-- Norton says 50 miles, I don't think the distance is relevant but not a big ride, is real significant. I've had people call me and ask do I loosen the nuts and start again or do I go from where it is. That's another debated point. I always go from where I am because I can't see that loosening nuts isn't going to get you back to step one.

Harvey: Well, I think loosening the nuts is not a bad idea. Because you kind of need to get some of the shit and crud off there and if you back it up just a touch, like an eighth of a turn, and go from there somehow I feel you're getting back to a cleaner torque mode or something.

Scot: Like the junk between the nut and the washer makes it slide easier? Or makes it slide harder?

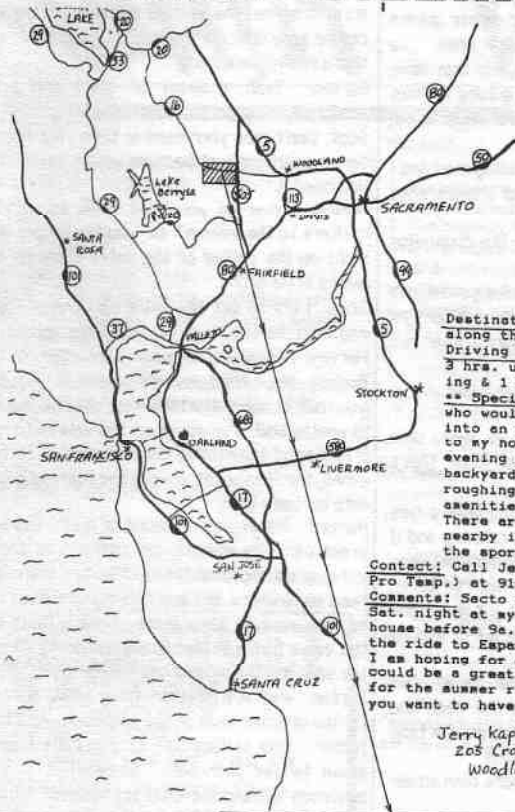
Harvey: I rebuilt an Alfa engine once and they said do that and I thought well, there must be a reason-- the Italians built Ferraris, right?

[Phil stands and spontaneously breaks into song; others eye him curiously.]

(Cont. p. 10)



CLUB OVERNIGHTER



CLUB RIDE

Date: 5/3/87.

Meeting Place:
Jerry's honey
shop, Esparto,
Ca. West side
of road 85B,
1/4 mile south
of road 22A.
Look for N.O.C.
sign.

Times: Try to
arrive 10a.m.
for rest, wrench-
ing & lockabout.
Main ride begins
NOON.

Destination: Clear Lake & points
along the way.

Driving Times: Approx. 1 1/2 to
3 hrs. up here, 4 to 6 hrs. tour-
ing & 1 1/2 to 3 hrs home.

** Special Notes: For those of you
who would like to make this ride
into an overnighiter, please come
to my house, afternoon or early
evening on Saturday 5/2/87. My
backyard will be available for
roughing it, house for necessary
amenities and garage for bikes.
There are motels and restaurants
nearby if you're not interested in
the sporting life.

Contact: Call Jerry Kaplan (Ride Leader -
Pro Temp.) at 916-787-3993.

Comments: Secto area riders not spending
Sat. night at my place, could come to my
house before 9a.m. Sunday to join us for
the ride to Esparto.

I am hoping for a good turnout. This
could be a great shakedown run (bad joke)
for the summer riding & camping season. If
you want to have a good time - BE THERE!

Jerry Kaplan
205 Cross St
Woodland



WERTHERN'S LAW OF SUSPENDED JUDGMENT:

Assumption is the mother of all screw-ups.

FIRST RULE OF ALL INTELLIGENT TINKERING:

Save all the parts.

LERMAN'S LAW OF TECHNOLOGY:

Any technical problem can be overcome given
enough time and money.

LERMAN'S COROLLARY:

You are never given enough time or money.



Send renewals to Alan

NORTON OWNERS CLUB



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

Scot: Well, they lost something in the translation ... What about cams?

Harvey: Well, let's work on heads for awhile. ... I'm not sure that the phosphor bronze and newer guides are all that better than the original iron ones. I've just seen too many original Norton heads that have gone 30-40-50,000 miles on the iron guides without loosening up a whole lot. How about your experience, Phil?

Phil: Well, it was originally a Norvil racing mod and I think the bronze guide has better heat transference and is a better bearing material.

Burton: I think that's the big factor -- the dissimilar metals ...

Phil: I think if you fit them on a road bike you're just flattering yourself. You don't need them. And they're certainly not going to last as long. They'll wear out quicker.

Harvey: The phosphor bronze wear out quicker ...

Phil: Oh yes.

Harvey: That's what I'm saying. Don't we agree that the longest lasting valve guides are cast iron? That's all I'm trying to say.

Burton: My normal riding pattern ... I'll take a ride cross country or maybe halfway cross country and if you're going to crank all day at 80-90 mph between stops for gas ... it just seems like when I've taken the bike apart the valve stems are a lot nicer and rounder and smoother and don't have a lot of shit on them with the phosphor bronze guides.

Alan: The bronze guides will expand more when they're hot, and they'll stay tight in the head and loose on the valve because of that. Iron guides tend to loosen up in the head when they get hot.

Harvey: Well, the aluminum expands more than either the phosphor bronze or the iron.

Alan: That's right. But the phosphor bronze is a much closer match to the aluminum than the iron is. That's my point.

Harvey: As far as thermal conductivity, they're both close to the same. I think the phosphor bronze is about twenty percent better than the iron. But they're both excellent compared to the valve stem for instance which is the stainless, I think.

Burton: Going back to the head gasket question by the way ... One of the things I think is important if you take the head off, and I think a lot of people who take the head off don't do this, is to check the flatness of the head. It's a real good idea to check it, have it checked, or just go ahead and have it surfaced for what it costs.

Scot: Well, I don't believe in having any machine work done unless it's really necessary because it's one less time you can do it when you need it.

Burton: Yeah, well at least have it checked.

Scot: Bill Mankin down at Raber's will run that head across a pretty rough surface before he gives it back to you and you can look to see that there is a uniform scratch across the sealing surface and therefore you can be sure that it's pretty flat. And I think that's all that's really necessary.

Burton: Yeah, a sheet of glass and a piece of sandpaper is a good method of testing.

Scot: Don't face your head or trim your barrels or go for an overbore just because you're there. Make sure you need it.

Harvey: What do you guys think about fitting the rockers to the valves? Do you try to get the rocker right on the center of the valve stem or off to the side a little bit?

Scot: I try to get the little ball end in the pushrod and then the other end has to hit the valve ...

Harvey: I know you have some trouble with that, Scot.

Burton: No, I think Harvey's point is a good one. If you look at stock Nortons a lot of time the alignment is pretty bad. I've adjusted the valves for people or friends and sometimes the alignment is terrible.

[Fred, the family cat, enters the room and Alan jumps into Burton's lap.]

Harvey: The reason I asked is that I used to go to great pains to shim up the rockers so they hit the valve stem right on the middle but then, later on, I read somewhere and was talking to Gene Austin that no, you want to have them offset a little bit where the valve turn a little bit and uniformly wears around the seat and the side of the valve.

Burton: Well it's an interesting point. The big thing for me is loose ends on the pushrods. And that's a big factor. This is that set of pushrods I was talking about [shows pushrods]. Sometimes you take the pushrods out and the ends are loose. People say put some Wick and Lock on, but the fact is that it changes the alignment of the end of the rod and then the rods aren't straight. Then, how the rod looks like it's aligned to the rocker and how it really is varies with how much the rod rotates as it's in motion.

Harvey: What do you do on your race bike, Lee?

Lee: I pretty much center them because I really don't think that the rocker rubbing across the valve like that ... I really don't think it rotates.

Phil: It's more of a sideways pressure on it. I asked Les about this because he took me to task. I wanted some shims and he said, "What do you want shims for?" I said, "So I can get the things in the center." He said, "You shouldn't have to do that." I said, "Well it isn't in the center so I want to move it." And he said, "It should be in the center to start with. If it isn't that means your valve guide hasn't been put in straight." He said from the factory they come with just one shim. But, depending on who you talk to you'll get a different view. (Cont. p. 11)

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Scot: I think it's one of those effects that over a 10,000 mile average, two-year period, is not going to make any difference. But the guy who is at 40-50,000 miles, maybe you'll see a difference there. So I don't think it's a big effect. I think the one with phosphor bronze versus cast iron is a good one because you'll wear out the stems with the cast iron guides at about the same time as the guides are shot whereas the stems will last two, maybe even three, sets of guides assuming that the valve lasts if you use the phosphor bronze guides.

Harvey: So what have we decided is best? If you're going to do a rebuild.

Phil: I think probably a better thing to do is take away that spring washer off the rocker. That relieves the sideways pressure.

Scot: How much clearance do you allow then?

Phil: No, take that spring washer out.

Scot: Yeah, but you've got to allow more clearance.

Phil: Well, you've got some clearance there anyway.

Burton: It's a Norton, you've always got clearance.

Scot: If you take your washer out and you add shims.

...

Harvey: That's one of the things Paul Dunstall recommends in his tuning book.

Phil: You need to reduce drag that that spring washer exerts on the rocker; you need to take it out and put in shims.

Lee: I run those spring washers and actually I shim them up fairly tight so that there's very little endplay.

Phil: The spring washer is a cheap way of keeping the rocker up against the shim.

Burton: What's Norton's approach on the production racer?

Scot: They use springs.

Harvey: By the way, you can buy those shims at any bearing place or even automobile places.

Alan: They've got to be hard enough.

Harvey: I don't like to use springs either; I generally replace them.

Scot: I use whatever I find on the floor. Maybe even clean it off.

Harvey: You guys use any Loctite on any of the bolts that go into the head?

Phil: Not on the head, no.

Burton: Actually I've been thinking about doing that on the spindle covers. They're only torqued to seven pounds, or whatever it is, and I've noticed that the front right side is always loose. The others seem to stay tight.

Harvey: How about the socket head bolts that hold on the carburetor manifold?

Burton: I use a lot of Loctite on those.

Phil: Never have.

Burton: I tell you what I'm going to do now. I'm going to safety wire all the allen screws together so they can come loose but not fall out.

Harvey: It's a lot of work.

Burton: It is, but I... I haven't actually had them come loose since that time [on the road in Omaha].

Scot: I've never had one come loose and I've never used Loctite.

Harvey: Hal You're lucky.

Scot: What I will use is a spring washer though. One of those lock washers that are split in one place, not the star washer. You can get those in stainless steel and they're small enough so that you can get one which will fit right under the head of the bolt. And they don't occupy any extra space. There's really no shoulder around the intake manifold. I'll use the red, high temp RTV. I'll smear a very thin coat on the insulating washer between the manifold and the head just to take care of any chance of an intake manifold leak. And I've always had real good luck. I've heard of other people who fit the Mikuni manifold and they won't get those two inside bolts tight. If one of those backs out it will fall down into your valve and it'll look just like someone missed putting the pushrod into the end of the rocker.

Harvey: Coburn had that happen once.

Scot: Hey, sucker, that's what happened to Maya and you keep accusing me of missing the rocker with the pushrod!

Harvey: What? Missing the rocker with the pushrod... Oh...

Burton: That IS one of the trickier operations on using the screwdriver to get it all to....

Lou: Do you have any trick ways to do that?

Harvey: Yeah! You use a spoke. One of the short end spokes. You know where they're bent and go around into your hub? You just reach in there with one of those and you put a light in the backside so you can see what you're doing and you can pull them into place. And I usually put a little STP on the ends of them so when you squish the rocker down on the pushrod it stays there [I use grease--MR].

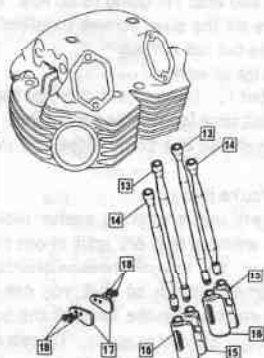
Burton: That's a good idea, anyway, I think, about the STP. I usually put a little white grease on but anything... because it helps the rod to slip around on the ball to get it really aligned properly.

Scot: I like to use assembly lube on both ends of the pushrod and on the lifters where they rub on the cam. And I also will take a rubber band and I'll run it from one rocker adjusting nut to the other -- exhaust to intake, on both sides -- and that keeps them both levered up so they're pushing down on the ends of the pushrods. Then I'll take my flashlight, a mini mag, hold it in my mouth, and look in through the port cover, take a screwdriver or a spoke like Harvey

(Cont. p. 12)



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said, wiggle them around and when I get it set the rubber band will hold it in there.

Harvey: Well, with those spokes you can pull and you can push.

Burton: That's a good combination.

Scot: And you have to be careful when you drop the head on not to wedge one of those pushrods in an awkward location.

[Tape runs out at this point. New tape installed]

Burton: Well those are all the words of wisdom I have to say about the engine.

Harvey: Oh, we're still on the head, right?

Harvey: We have to work our way down.

Burton: I've found one thing about head leaks. The torquing of the front two head bolts is real essential and I've found a lot of leaks that are hard to trace coming from the exhaust valve covers. If you do the sanding with emery paper of those covers on glass you can get them a lot flatter.

Harvey: That's right. Most of them get curved where they get bolted on and you just have to clean them up.

Phil: A quick little tip is when you have the gasket on the cover cut away the bottom of it so there's no ledge, no lip. Because the gasket's a lot wider than the actual cover. So when it's on there it forms a little reservoir behind it.

Scot: On the inside....

Phil: Just take a razor blade and cut away so that it forms the gasket to the inside of the cover.

[Loud screams from Lee, "Kill the bastards!" for no apparent reason.]

Harvey: People also forget that the Nortons originally came with a soft, flat washer underneath the nuts that hold on your rocker covers and that was an oil seal because oil leaks around the stud and you could file and put gasket goop on and never stop THAT leak. But, if you do like said, that'll help quite a bit.

Scot: Does anyone have a technique that'll let you reuse those rocker cover gaskets? When your retorquing the head you pull them off every time.

Phil: Just put sealant, preferably between gasket and cover, on one side.

Scot: It still ends off coming off on the head.

Harvey: Why do you take your rocker covers off when you retorque your head?

Scot: To readjust the valves. You don't readjust the valves?

Harvey: I didn't figure I'd moved the head that much.

Burton: I always do that but I never find much difference.

Scot: I've had to readjust them, especially when you use the composition gasket.

Phil: The thing is, when you tighten your head down and you get MORE clearance. I've done that. I don't know how it's happened.

Scot: That's when the studs are starting to pull out of the head....

Phil: Well it IS 90 ft-lbs, isn't it? [JOKE!-PR]

Harvey: What do you guys think about porting?

Scot: Well I think if you've got a 30mm head and you want to put 32mm carbs on just bring the outside ends of the ports out to 32mm and that's all the factory ever did.

Harvey: Remember the Clymer manual, at the back there was a hopping-up-your-Norton-and-port-it section? Do you remember that, Lee?

Burton: I figure Norton put a lot of time into the head. It was probably better engineered than anything else.

Harvey: Do you do much porting on your race bike, Lee?

Lee: Yes, a lot, extensive porting on my street bike and my race bike. The racer's got an early 750 head and I've opened them up quite a bit. I've got Amal MKIIs, 36mm.

Scot: Stop to consider though that we're talking of modifications that will increase air flow at high rpms and most guys on the street are going to shift at 5 grand anyway.

Harvey: That's right, you want velocity at low rpms for street bikes to give good mixing.

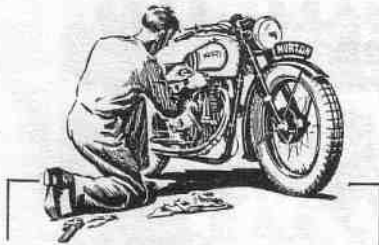
Burton: The biggest single change I've seen was to get rid of the factory airbox.

Lee: I don't think porting is something everybody should just jump in and try and do.

Harvey: It doesn't help you except for high rpms.

Phil: If you do any porting work yourself you've got to be real careful because it's real close. It gets real thin around the top of the inlet ports.

Harvey: I've had a couple of bikes where guys have ported the intakes and broken in where the intake valve springs go down. Right clean through. And boy, you burn a lot of oil then. (Cont. p. 13)



TECH TIPS

Lou: How do you port a head?

Harvey: Dremel tools.

Lou: And how do you guarantee that you get a round orifice at the end?

Harvey: It's not really important. What you can do is put your intake manifolds on and use some dye-cam or machinists' dye and coat the surface and go back inside with a tool and scratch the surface and go back where the intake ports meet the intake manifold. You blend in over about an inch in length with a Dremel tool. And the intake is much more important than the exhaust.

Scot: If the truth were known you don't even really need to do that. I've run 32mm carbs on 30mm heads before and you cannot tell the difference.

Burton: There's one theory that the dam effect that's created by the size helps the agitation.

Harvey: There's extra mixing that happens if you hit a step. In fact, BSA found this out when they blended larger carbs on the DB34GS. The step down there going smaller into the head gave more power than when they blended everything in. Remember that? I think on the Norton it's good to match the intake manifolds to the ports and have a smooth flow going in.

Scot: Yeah, I think about that when I'm going up to Alice's and

it gives me a real good feeling....

Harvey: Are we finished with the head?

Scot: What about valve springs? I've had experiences with the big, stiff valve springs and it seems to me that with my high lift cam and all that stuff all they did was wear out the cam and guides faster. You put the stock springs in and they're less stiff and gee, I sure like the titanium retaining collars and all that stuff... and I think that's a neat setup.

Harvey: Has anyone had trouble with valves floating on the Norton?

Phil: I don't take them with me in the bathtub.

Lee: Only a couple of times. On my racer I revved it to about 7500 and it floated a bit.

[Lou leaps up in karate self-defense stance as

dishwasher abruptly starts in the kitchen.]

Harvey: See, we never go above about seven on street bikes.

Lee: No, I redline my racer at seven too. But every once in awhile it would go beyond and you'd hear it and it would lose power.

Harvey: You've never had a valve kiss a piston though, right?

Lee: I don't think so.

Harvey: I don't think I've ever had trouble floating the valves on a standard Norton.

Harvey: I don't think you'd need to go to stiffer valve springs is what I'm proposing. In a street-going Norton.

Scot: Well, it depends on your cam profile too. If you've got a radical, real high lift, steep rise rate cam maybe you need a really stiff spring to follow it.

Harvey: Maybe we should talk about cams a little bit. First of all, stay away from 3S, 4S, and 5S. Everything else is okay, right?

Lou: 2S is okay?

Harvey: Yes, it's a stock cam. But it's a real radical one. If you look at the duration and the profile of the standard Norton cam that we use in Commandos in the early seventies that was what they used in their Thruxton racing machines. It's a pretty hot cam just standard, the way it is. And then you go to the 4S and 5S; those things are so radical that they're just no good for street at all. It's a total mismatch for the Norton engine. And they have old technology; they don't have smooth sort of ramps up in the acceleration-- limiting the acceleration of the valve to a certain maximum point. That's what really makes the force on the valve train and makes things wear out. It's force that makes things wear out. And good old $F=MA$, well you don't change the mass because that's a reciprocating mass in your valve train but you can change the acceleration by changing the cam profile. And Norton used old world techniques and not modern engineering in their cams and their race cams and they went with very fast, high lift cams and that was not the way to go--it was very damaging to the valve trains. In fact the Combat cams were notorious for wearing out and going quickly. The megacycle cam, for instance, is designed differently. It doesn't have much more lift than the standard cam but the starting ramps and the exiting ramps are tuned and ground in such a way that peak acceleration is limited on the valve train and you don't wear out those cams and you don't damage your valve gear as much. You don't need as stiff springs as you do with the real hot Norton cams.

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH



Norton owners club

V.A.T. REG. No. 368 8236 11

Northern California Branch

FOUNDED 1965

President: JOHN HUDSON, Esq.

Date February 23, 1987

Hon. Willie L. Brown, Jr.
California State Assembly
Room 217, State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Bill 36

Dear Mr. Brown:

I write on behalf of the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club to express our members' opposition to the captioned legislation, which would make compulsory the wearing of a helmet by anyone riding a motorcycle in California. We are several hundred owners, riders and preservers of Nortons, a classic British motorcycle produced during the years 1902 to 1977. The object of the Club is to promote, encourage and develop all motorcycling activities, with particular emphasis on the riding and preservation of Norton motorcycles. Naturally, safe riding is essential to the interests of this Club.

Our opposition to AB 36 is based on the firm belief of a majority of our members (polled at two consecutive regular meetings) that wearing a safety helmet is a very good idea whilst motorcycling, but that whether or not to wear a helmet should nonetheless remain a private decision. Unlike the situation with regard to the mandatory use of seatbelts in cars, where a cogent argument may be made that unbelted drivers and passengers endanger other road users as well as themselves, the unhelmeted motorcyclist jeopardizes only himself. It is not the proper function of American government, whether local, state or federal, to paternalistically protect the adult citizen from himself. Individual liberties must be protected against such an encroachment, lest our freedom of choice in many things be gradually eroded. Will government next be telling us we cannot ride motorcycles at all? And then no sports cars or convertibles?

Moreover, the necessary quantum of evidence to support the proponent's assertion that the state ultimately must sustain "brainless motorcyclists" is lacking. Laws should not be passed in an atmosphere of hysteria.

The right to ride a motorcycle bareheaded is perhaps not of constitutional stature, and I do not doubt that a mandatory helmet law would probably pass muster as an exercise of state police powers, but it is an unwise and dangerous precedent to set, one which numerous states have taken and then seen fit to repeal or modify. Attention should rather focus on driver education and on keeping drunks and other incompetents off the road.

Please use your office and influence to oppose this bill.

Yours sincerely,

John Covell
President, No. Cal. N.O.C.

cc: Richard Katz
Chair, Ass'y Transportation Ctte.

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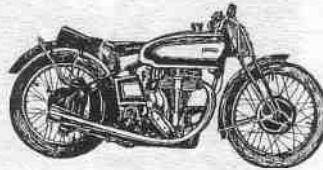
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