



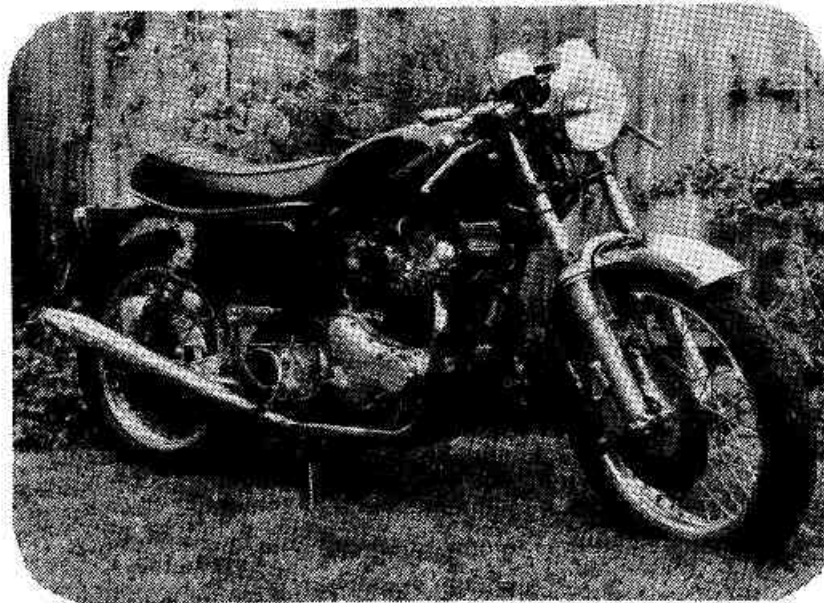
# Norton Notice



**The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club**

**No. 134**

**June, 1989**



**"Mostly Norton" by Chris Nichols**



# The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club



## 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 **\$18.50 (pounds sterling) + \$18.00**

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 \$18.00 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.

## \* CLUB OFFICERS \*

### PRESIDENT-EDITOR

Alan Goldwater  
1780 Chanticleer Ave  
Santa Cruz, Ca 95062 12  
(408) 475-7505

### V.P./RIDES

Margie Siegal  
625 Fairmount Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94611  
(415) 654-1933

### SEC/TREASURER

Harry Bunting  
1165 Crandano Ct  
Sunnyvale, Ca 94087  
(408) 736-6492

### RECORDING SEC

Art Sirota  
1281 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, Ca 94025  
(415) 327-3167

### NOTICE PUBLISHER

Marick Payton  
301 West O'Connor  
Menlo Park, Ca 94025  
(415) 321-5083

### PARAPHERNALIA

Robert Briscoe  
3232 Balboa Street  
San Francisco, CA 94121  
(415) 387-5593

## 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 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

### Club Meeting Schedule

The club meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 7:30 PM. The location rotates between Peninsula, East Bay, City, and South Bay locations

**June 8** San Francisco  
Once more we are meeting at the Harbor Light cafe and bar (provided the cook is in), 780 Embarcadero at Berry St. This is south of the Bay Bridge, across from The Sailing Ship Restaurant. They close at 10 so the meeting will start promptly at 7:30.

**July 13** Peninsula  
**Prince of Wales Pub**  
106 E. 25th Avenue  
San Mateo, Ca  
Great selection of beers and dartboards in our private meeting room.

## CLUB RIDES:

Coordinated by Margie Siegal

**June 4--Norton Day at the Races**  
Assemble at TT Motors, 2800 Adeline St., Berkeley, 10 am. Ride up to Sears Point and watch Eric Swortzfigure, winner at Daytona, go fast.

**July 2--Annual Norton Beach Bash:** Alan Goldwater will once again

preside over good times in Santa Cruz. Call (408) 475-7505 for more info.

**July 19-23--International Norton Rally:** Kimberley, British Columbia. 3500 miles in 12 days? Call Alan if you're interested (408) 475-7505.

**August 25-27 -- Annual Norton Campout:** Tentatively to be at Grover Hot Springs. We will be meeting up with the BSA club for a joint barbeque. Volunteers (especially with vans, trailers or sidecars) needed. Attain good karma and call Margie (415) 654-1933.

**Notes on Rides:** For a few months it seemed like nobody was interested in riding and I was going to bring that up at the last meeting BUT about fifteen people showed up at the Norton Day at Alice's. Of course, I had to show up traitorously mounted on a Guzzi and got royally teased for it.

OK. Is Norton Day at Alice's what people want to do? Pros: no getting lost, no advance planning, nobody has to stick their neck out as ride leader. Cons: we never got to try out any new roads.

So, if I can't scout up a ride leader, it's Norton Day at Alice's instead of a ride that month. Comments (and volunteer ride leaders) appreciated--Margie Siegal.

## "Mostly Norton" by Chris Nichols

There I was, enjoying my cup of Joe and getting harassed by those cute gals at Alice's (I had my ears planted between those two speakers at the counter, not particularly enjoying their beamed in Doctor's Office music) when he strolled in, our famous (or is it infamous?) editor in chief, Dr. Alan. Well to make a short story long, the Doc eventually suggested that I take a crack at writing a, hopefully, short but informative article on my latest Commando Special.

Well, after a year and a half in the cozy confines of my living room, the beast "Mostly Norton" has finally been substantially completed, just in time for the wet weather.

The frame, swingarm and rear wheel started life as a '75 E/S model. The front forks, engine, gearbox and primary are from my old '74 850. Everything else came from a multitude of basket cases and our "good buddies" in England.

The frame and all ancillaries were taken to Clarence III for powder coating. Wheels (allow rims) and standard hubs were taken to Kelly Moss for the stainless spokes treatment, while the gearbox received its new bushes and bearings and the engine got its regiment of Stage II upgrades in the warmth of my kitchen (this causing the disembarkment of two once friendly girl friends).

Engine mods included "pinned" roller mains, lightened and polished rods, 2S cam with fresh bushes, lightened cam followers, chamfered and

polished pushrods, -.090" milled head, reshaped and polished ports, lightened and polished rockers, Tri-rate springs with Titanium collars, pocketed .020 pistons and a lot of "what did I forget to check."

The crucial 50W lubricant is monitored by a homemade pickup off the drive side intake rocker spindle to an oil pressure gauge mounted in tandem with the ignition switch off the upper triple clamps.

The front brake, a hand-drilled Norvil 11-1/2" floating disk, is squeezed by a light weight Lockheed racing caliper, controlled by a standard master cylinder through a Goodrich stainless line. A 100/90/19 Dunlap 591 "R" maintains control on the asphalt with the help of a Hyde forkbrace.

The rear stopper is a hand-drilled standard disk, gripped by a standard stainless-pistoned caliper, force fed by a (sorry guys) Kawasaki remote reservoir master cylinder (the remote being so remote it doesn't exist) through a very long Goodrich stainless line. All that being controlled by my English style left bootie on custom made Fair Spairs stainless rearsets. First time I've ever ridden a Commando that could screech the rear 120/90/18 "591" skin by the touch of a toe. Really exhilarating!!! And, to keep the heavy, wide-skinned Mk3 rear end under control are a pair of Works Performance shocks.

Electrics start with a completely handmade custom harness using 16 gauge copper wire interconnecting a 180

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watt Mk3 stator and zeners to a standard Lucas rectifier, capacitor and ignition switch. Somewhere, I snuck in a Hap Jones battery, held in place by an alloy bracket I made (actually an idea I received from Harvey Loucks with his dry cell battery holder). From the "y" the harness connects a custom fitted "Rocky" tail light to the high powered quartz headlight, and the stock 6V coils get advance notice from a Mistril Engineering Electronic Ignition (known to some as a Lucas Rita). I highly recommend this system: a much sturdier unit than Boyer!

A Phil Radford "nut welder" procedure and "rear job" convinced my swingarm to stay in line with the gearbox (see Phil for an explanation) and the whole engine assembly is held in line with Mk3 front and rear isolastics, production racer (Norvil) headsteady limited to a .005" vibration zone, all held in place by stainless steel.

Well, I'm sure I've missed something. But basically, what we've got here is the same thing that every dedicated NORTON owner has, a personal representation of his or her opinion of what a NORTON should be --Unapproachable.

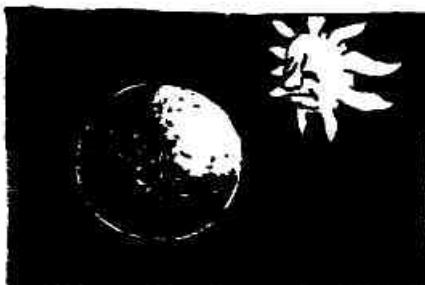
[I took advantage of Chris' article to ask for evaluations of some of the mods he had made about which I have been

particularly curious. The questions and his answers follow. --Marick]

Question: Do you think a fork brace is worthwhile? Chris: Yes, it helps a little bit if you ride hard. But, it is important to have a good front tire (I use a Dunlop 591), tight isolastics and a strong frame. I have had an additional cross-brace welded between my down tubes to strengthen the front end.

Question: How well does the wide rear tire work (I have several times read and heard that one should stay with the original factory-spec tires.)? Chris: I think Norton's handle well because the original tires don't have that much traction. For a wide tire to work well it is imperative that one's isolastics be in excellent shape and tight (I use .005" clearance and have the racing head steady) and the swing arm must be tight.

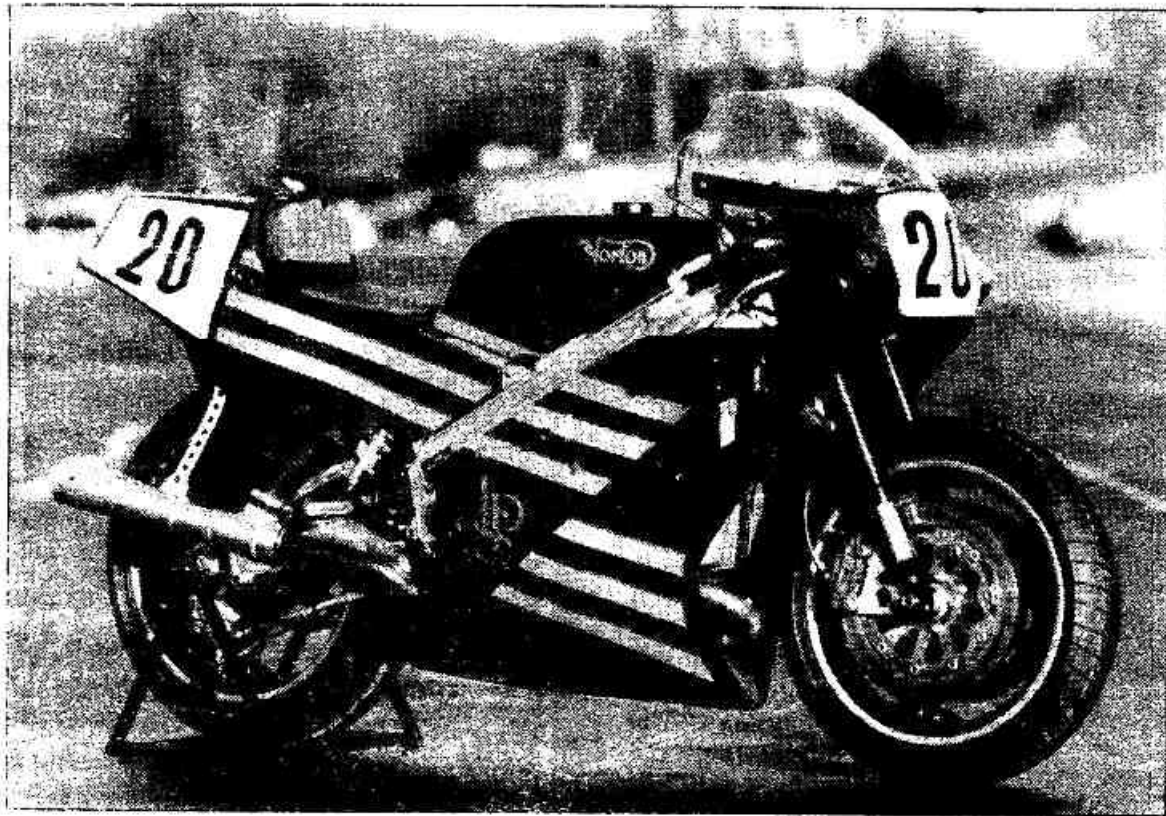
Question: Are the Works Performance shocks worth the price? Chris: No. I do think gas shocks are best because they won't heat up as much and lose their dampening but Girlings in good shape work fine in ordinary use. I would probably try Fox gas shocks next time as they are cheaper than the Works Performance.



our story:  
Fred, Hugh,  
and Bill  
O'Brady  
are united.  
Let FAITHFUL  
Norton club  
enjoy crash  
landing on  
Mars!



INDUSTRIAL  
CLOCK OF CHANGES  
People are sending  
FORTY LETTERS  
to New York  
every day!!  
THE ESCALATION OF MAN  
IS EXPECTED TO RESULT  
IN AN INCREASE IN TROP  
CONSTITUTIONS  
EVENTUALLY ABANDONING  
OTHER THEATRES OF WAR  
OF UNDESIRABLE HUMANITY.



Water-cooled twin-rotor rotary-powered Nortons will contest the 1989 World Championship Formula One Road Race Series with sponsorship from the John Player Special (JPS) cigarette brand. No other sponsor identity will appear on the black, grey and gold machines which will be ridden by Brits Trevor Nation and either Steve Spray or Steve Cull, depending on which JPS Norton press release one is to believe. Nation is a double Isle of Man winner, having won the 1984 750cc Production TT and the 1986 1000cc Production TT. Spray is a relative newcomer to road racing but impressed Norton officials in late-1988 test sessions aboard the rotary Norton. Cull is the fastest rider ever on the Isle of Man TT circuit. The 34-year-old resident of Northern Ireland, turned in a 119.08 mph lap of the 37.73-mile course in last year's Senior TT which he won. Six rounds comprise the '89 Formula One Series and the races will be held in Japan, Holland, Portugal, Finland and Ireland and on the Isle of Man. The Norton team will also contest the eight-round British Formula One Championship Series and England's Supercup Series.



## NORTON DAY AT ALICE'S

Sunday, May 14th, dawned clear and beautiful in San Francisco and I was up "bright and early" to get Nort ready for a ride. As I came south on I-280 a glance in the west told me that Skyline (S.R. 35) would be a cold, foggy wet one from S.R. 92 on; so on the premise that discretion is the larger part of valor, I chose Canada Road instead and didn't cut west until I arrived at Woodside. (I was right.) To my great surprise--this is a first, folks--no one had arrived at Alice's Restaurant before me. I pulled up about 8:50 am. Rick (of cam chain tensioner fame) came in shortly behind me and we enjoyed a pleasant conversation until a few minutes later when Don Dannmeier arrived. Wait, I didn't mean it like that . . . . Actually, we weren't interrupted, 'cos the only available seat was at the counter.

Over the next 90 minutes or so, over a dozen more Nortons came in, making it the largest assemblage of British bikes of the Snortin' persuasion these old eyes have seen in quite a while. It was heartening, yea verily. Only one casualty occurred during the mammoth bench racing session that ensued, involving a photographer and four lopsided motorcycles, suddenly

getting better acquainted with Alice's parking lot pavement than their owners ever dreamt they'd be. But, groaningly entertaining for those of us who happened to be standing by.

Eventually, Phil Radford finished tucking into his eggs and hash browns and a short run was made down Skyline to the S.R. 9 interseciton, where further feats of derring-do were discussed in the convenient parking lot there. Even then, after 12 o'clock, some stretches of Skyline were still foggy, so it's just as well that Skyline between 92 and 84 was avoided earlier. That said, I will report that my ride home, up that same piece of road, had me wishing for a visor-wiper on my helmet and an extra City Bike to tuck beneath my sweater.

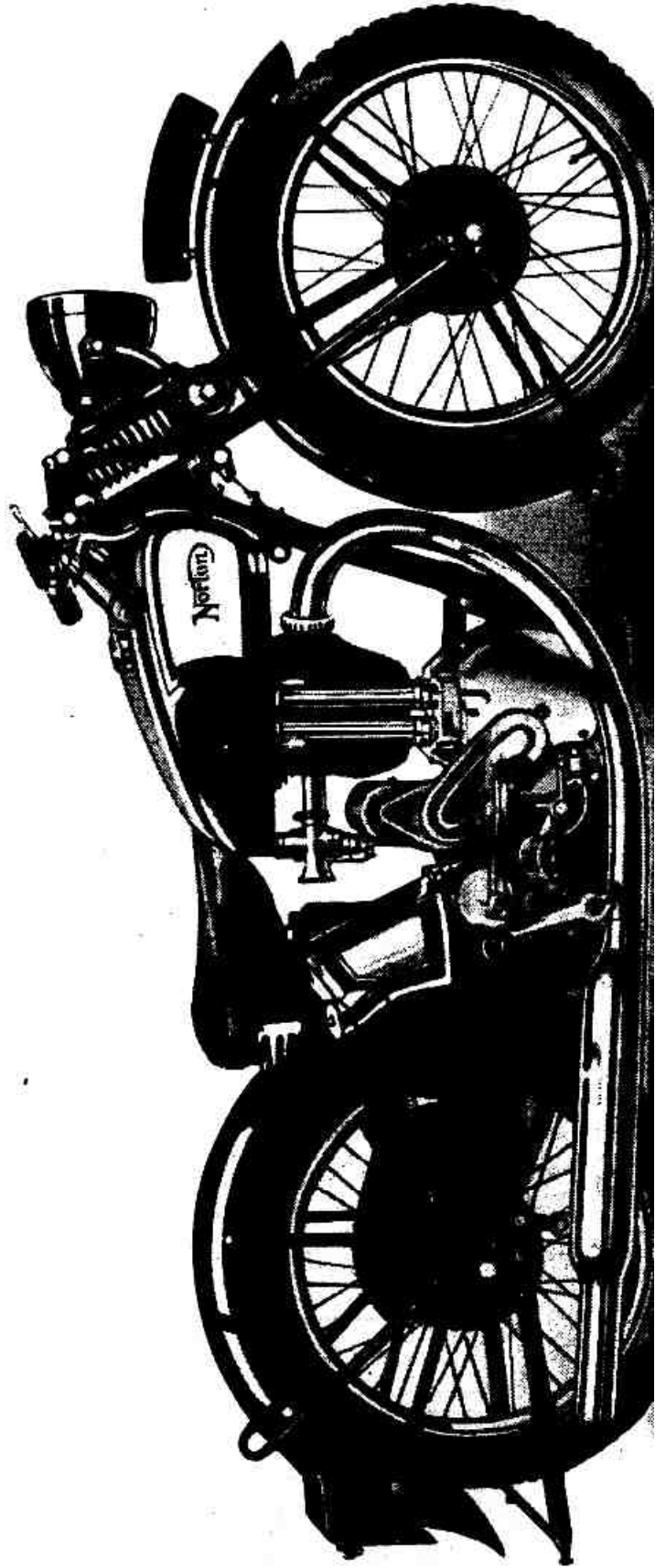
All in all, a fine day. Good roads, handsome machinery, excellent companions, and tasty chow--what more could a motorcyclinst wish for? (Hey, that was rhetorical; be real.)

See you the next one. Keep the rubber side down.

--John (ex-pres) Covell



MODEL NO. E.S.2      4.90 H.P.      O.H.V.





*Code Word : CHIRK*

**ENGINE.**—Bore 79 mm. Stroke 100 mm. 490 c.c. Push rod operated overhead valve. Totally enclosed rocker gear.

**LUBRICATION.**—Full dry sump—gear pump pressure feed to bearings and piston. Valve guide lubrication.

**SILENCER.**—Of scientific design, efficiently silencing the exhaust gases without interfering with engine performance.

**CARBURETTER.**—AMAL needle jet, twist grip control.

**FRAME.**—Triangulated cradle type, of immense strength, built throughout in jigs, all joints are brazed. High tensile steel tube. Graduated section lugs are used.

**GEARBOX.**—Four-speed. Ratios: Solo 4.44; 5.37; 7.85; 13.2; Sidecar 4.93; 5.96; 8.7; 14.7. Positive stop change-speed lever (Patent No. 424,154). Gate control available if specified when ordering. Shock absorber incorporated in clutch.

**OIL BATH CHAINCASE.**—NORTON. Patent No. 406,599.

**TRANSMISSION.**—Hans Renold chains.

**BRAKES.**—7" Internal expanding, 1½" wide, smooth and powerful in operation, providing a feeling of security. Quickly adjustable.

**WHEELS.**—Quickly detachable and interchangeable fitted with journal bearings.

**TYRES.**—26 x 3.25 Dunlop Heavy Cord.

**FORKS.**—Patent No. 387,550, fitted with rebound springs and hand adjustable friction disc shock absorber. Fork link adjustment provided.

**HANDLEBARS.**—Patent No. 419,336, rubber mounted, fitted with steering damper.

**SADDLE.**—Flexible top, mounted so as to give an exceptionally comfortable riding position.

**FOOTRESTS.**—Adjustable. Lugs are provided for fitment of pillion footrests.

**STANDS.**—Front and rear with additional prop stand, foot operated.

**PETROL TANK.**—2½ gallons capacity. Chromium plated.

**OIL TANK.**—Chromium plated and lined.

**STANDARD FINISH.**—All bright parts chromium plated, all enamelled parts finished in three coats best quality black enamel.

**MUDGUARDS.**—Large section, affording adequate protection.

**TOOL BOX.**—With complete tool equipment.

**GROUND CLEARANCE.**—Approximately 4½"

# NORTON OWNER'S GUIDE TO INTERPRETING WORKSHOP MANUALS

by I. Pushtit Holme

As we all know, the purpose of workshop manuals is to impart clear, concise instructions as an aid to help those of us who are foolhardy or brave enough to repair our own machines. However, these hallowed bike repair bibles often fall short of their mark and need further explication. Here are some examples:

"Oil may leak from the rocker-box. . . . Should readjustment of the pressure release . . . fail to effect a cure it will be necessary to have the rocker-box re-packed. This is an operation on which much time and patience may be expended with very indifferent results. There are no set instructions which will ensure success, which appears to be largely a matter of knack or use." (*Norton Motor Cycles*, by E. M. Franks, published in 1948, page 32.)

Literal translation: You're on your own, Jack.

"There is often a tendency--on the part of unskilled owners--to get the engine assembled in the shortest time possible. Some skilled operators are not excluded from this category, whilst this action is understandable, it is under these circumstances that things go wrong--watch a skilled race mechanic working--you will see that every part put back into the engine--is scrupulously clean--every moving part is lubricated before assembly, this together with precise also methodical working will ensure success, apart from the need to take

down the engine--to make good a bad job." (*Norton Twin Cylinder Manual*, Clymer Publications, page 12)

Literal translation: You make a messy bed, you get wrinkles.

"Disk Brake Caliper Rebuilding: If the caliper cylinders leak, the caliper should be rebuilt. Rebuilding a leaky caliper requires special tools, a super-clean work environment, and experience. Therefore, caliper service should be limited to removal and replacement. Take an unsatisfactory caliper to an authorized Norton dealer for rebuilding." (*Norton Commando All Years*, Copyright 1974, Clymer Publications, page 143)

Literal translation: You're on your own, Fred.

"Disk Brake Caliper Rebuilding: If the caliper unit shows evidence of brake fluid leakage, the piston seals require removal. This is a simple task which is carried out as follows: . . ." (*Norton Commando*, Copyright 1973 by Haynes, page 101)

Moral: Have as many different manuals at your disposal as possible.

"Machine Shop Work: The exhaust ports can be enlarged and polished. They should never be taken over 32 mm and only if your are (sic) going to fit larger carburetors." (*Norton Repari and*

(continued on page 11)

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## MORE SUGGESTIONS TO INOA RALLY ATTENDERS

Dear Bracebridge Street Boys,

If I might take up a little more valuable *Notice* space, there are a few things that I'd like to mention as a fallow-up to my recent letter. These are items that may, or may not, be revelant to folk travelling up to the Norton Rally at Kimberley in B.C. on July 19-23. (In *Notice* #132 on page 3 the rally was advertised as taking place in Burnaby. This should, of course, be Kimberley.)

Those of you heading for the rally might be interested to know that the major vintage car weekend in the Pacific Northwest takes place in the Portland area on July 15-16. The Saturday has racing action at Portland Raceway, which is located just to the west of I-5, a couple of miles south of the Columbia River. This is followed, on the Sunday, by the Forest Grove Concours. Forest Grove is a college town a little to the S.W. of Portland and 400 cars are expected to be on display.

Masochistic and hardcore members of the Velocette O.C. gather on Sunday, July 16, at Ashland in Southern Oregon, ready for the start of the "summer ride" the next morning. Assembly spot is at Emigrant Lake Campground, near to the KOA, about 3 miles S.E. of I-5. If any of you are cruising north on said highway at that time, by all means stop by for a drink and a chat, against a background of (more) thoroughbred machinery.

And, finally, on departing the Norton Rally and heading south, be advised that one of the best motorcycling roads anywhere is not far distant. I refer to the "going-to-the-sun-road" over 6,600 feet Logan Pass in the Rocky Mountain Glacier Park in N.W. Montana. An acquaintance of mine, who has travelled extensively in the Rockies, Alps and such like, speaks with reverence of Highway 191 that heads south from Bozeman (on I-90) towards Yellowstone and the Grand Teton Range. Commando Country!!

Cheers,  
Sam Jowett  
6630 Gilley Ave.  
Burnaby, B.C. V5H 3W9

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## WORKSHOP MANUALS

(continued from page 10)

*Tuneup Guide*, Copyright 1973 by Chilton Book Company, page 151)

Literal translation: Let's see . . . the inlet ports are the two funny round little ones where the exhaust pipes come out of the head and . . . no, that can't be right! Darn it, I never can get those two terms straight!!

"It is to be expected that the crankshaft assembly which is now to be stripped will contain approximately one teacup full of oil and provision should be made for collecting this oil in a suitable receptable." (*Factory Workshop Manual for Commando*, section C19)

Literal translation: Be sure to order genuine Norton factory teacup (part number 06-3418) prior to dismantling the crankshaft.

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## **WELCOME FROM THE INOA**

Dear Alan,

Welcome! Just received info from Jim Noll (our Pres) that Sue Ballard got your \$5 for Chapter Membership in the IN-USNOA. We're quite informal at times, i.e., this letter, but we seem to get it done.

As you probably know, the big reason behind this drive was to enable small groups as well as our National organization to put on rallies and get

some decent insurance for those meets. To this end, the AMA and INOA got together and we benefited! Will wonders never . . . you know.

Well, anyway, welcome aboard to the best British Cycle group of people going.

It shifts on the right?

Walt Branham,  
U.S. Rep for INOA

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### **CLASSIFIEDS**

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'74 Norton Commando 850 Roadster, 12,000 original miles, strong healthy runner, stock except for alloys, Koni's and Dunstall mufflers. Original owner. \$2,200 or bo. 285-6735

WANTED: Metal left side cover for 1973, 850 Roadster, with no dents. Harry Bunting, (408) 736-6492

1974 850 Commando "Gentleman's Express":

Interstate tank & side covers, Fastback tail section & seat, Norvil style 1/2 fairing, JPN front fender. Black/silver w/red stripe, all in Imron. Many high performance modifications including Norvil front brake, Norvil head steady, Mk III isolastics, roller bearing swing arm with cottered pivot, stainless fork brace, rear set controls w/reversed cam plate (shifts like stock), braided stainless oil and brake lines, Sun alloy rims, stainless spokes & nipples, oil pressure,

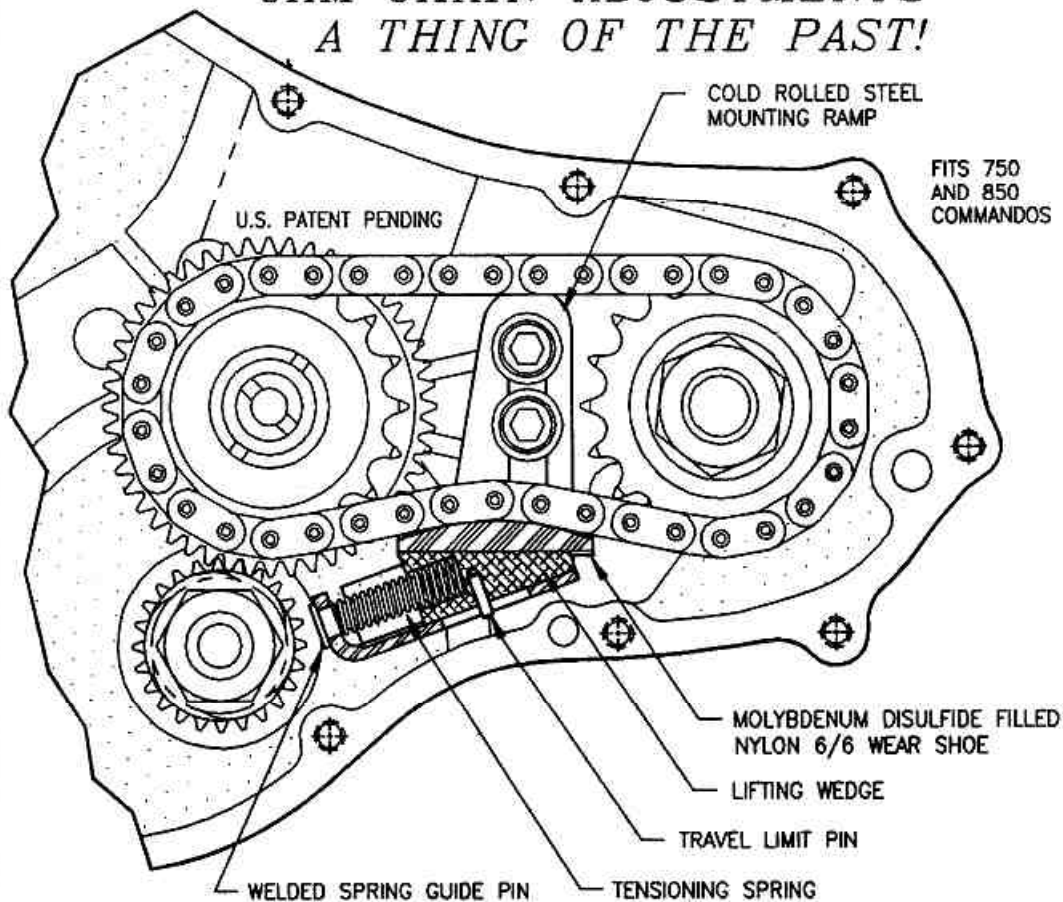
cylinder head and oil temp., ammeter and clock by VDO, oil filter head modified to accept Fram filter, Fiamme electric horns, halogen headlight, layshaft roller bearing, three phase 180 Watt alternator, Amal Mk II carbs, new chain & sprockets, 95% stainless fasteners. Full Size Krauser bags and mounts available for \$150. Priced at \$2900, You pay crating & shipping. Call Scot at (415) 829-3483 6-8PM Pacific Time Only.

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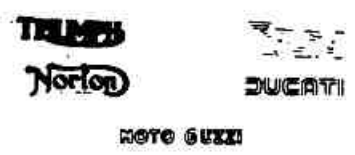
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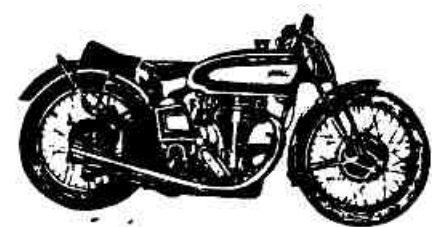
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Munroe has three mechanics that are familiar with Nortons and have been for a number of years. We can replace exhaust ports with the head on the bike and don't know of anyone else who can. The job looks like original factory! Call for a quote on shop prices. We also have a good Norton parts supply.



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