



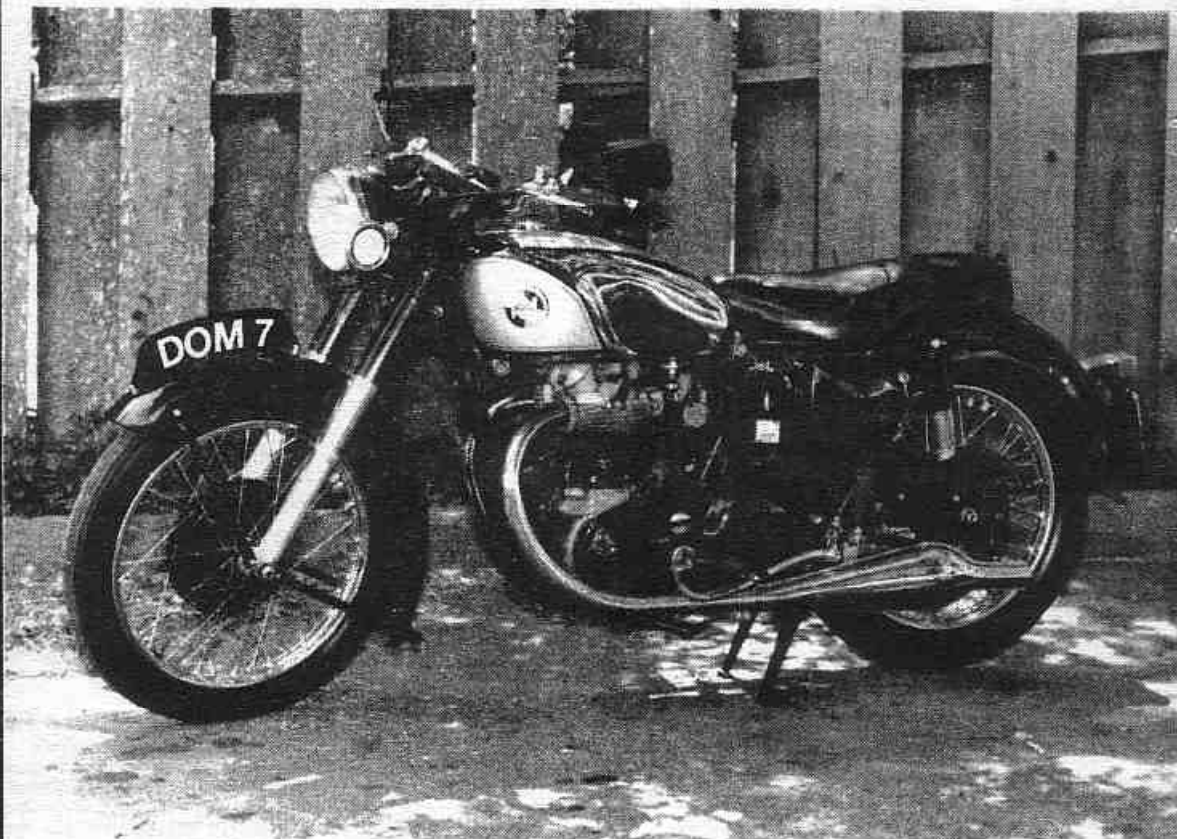
# Norton Notice



**The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club**

**No. 150**

**Oct. 1990**



**1955 Norton Model 7 Dominator, 500cc twin.  
Photographed by Barry Gillette.**



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 the 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 25th of each month.

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is available for \$15.00 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 listed on the mailing label of the NORTON NOTICE and the membership card. For example, 745/2 denoted 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.

The Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is affiliated with both the Norton Owners Club of England and the International Norton Owners Association. Interested persons can join these two organizations per the terms described on the Branch membership application form.

## CLUB OFFICERS

**PRESIDENT:** Alan Goldwater, 1780 Chanticleer Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95062. (408) 475-7505

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**PARAPHERNALIA:** Stan Beneveds, 36646 Darvon Ct., Neward, CA 94560. (415) 793-0704

**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 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 members 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 materials 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.

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## Upcoming Events

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### Club Rides

- Oct. 21 (Sun.)           Pumpkin Ride  
Meet at Alice's. Ride departs at 10 am
- Nov. 3 (Sat.) Northbay All-British Ride  
(Members only) w/ Ariel, BSA,  
& Enfield Owners
- Dec. 16 (Sun.)           Mt. Hamilton
- 

### Letters

Dear Norton Notice,

I read Alan Goldwater's article in September's *Notice*, and realized that I am in a unique position to shed some light on the mystery of why the Commando head steady has its holes drilled about 1/2 inch to the left of the frame centerline. For I happened to be present at the Norton factory when the prototype Commando was being developed and overheard the conversations among all the engineers. Now, as you probably already know, the British often dispense with the terms "left-hand" and "right-hand" when referring to motorcycles and instead use "off-side" and "nearside." The reason for this terminology is obvious to those of us who are off-side brained.

Now when the original drawings for the head steady were shown to one of the engineers by a junior draughtsman, he remarked that the holes were "a little off." What he meant, of course, was that the

(Continued on page 10)

### Meeting Schedule

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

**Oct. 11 -- East Bay NEW LOCATION**  
**Bison Brewing**, 2598 Telegraph Ave.,  
(intersection with Parker), Berkeley (415)  
841-7734

**Nov. 8 -- San Francisco**  
**Lake Merced Boathouse**. Off Skyline  
Blvd. Great food, nice room with big-  
screen cycle racing videos.

**Dec. 13 -- Peninsula**  
**The Prince of Wales Pub** on 25th Ave in  
San Mateo offers a wide selection of beers  
and a private meeting room with dart  
boards!

**January -- South Bay**  
**Harry's Hofbrau**, El Camino near Castro  
Street, Mountain View

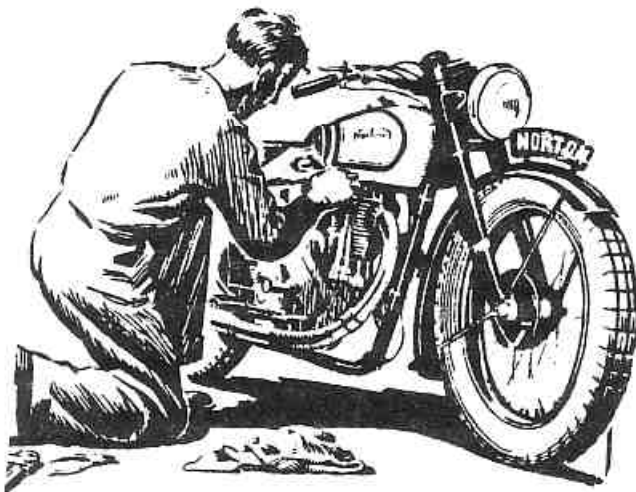
### Special Events

**NORTH BAY ALL-BRITISH RIDE & PARTY** (aka 50th Annual Don Danmeier Birthday Party): Saturday, 11/3. Ride starts at Baker's Square Restaurant, 1700 Novato Bl., Novato, 10 AM. Party begins 1 PM, 813 Lamont Ave., Novato. Call Don for more info: 897-6145 days and 898-0330 eves.

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## Alan's Wrench

### Tech Tips and Gossip from the President



In my column last month I mentioned my discovery that all Norton Commandos have the engine mounted offset with respect to the frame. Several of you wrote me to point out that this fact is even documented in the factory workshop manual. There seems to be agreement that the offset is a principle cause of the bikes tendency to pull to the left. I think this question is sufficiently interesting that I'm reprinting two letters in their entirety:

OUT THERE  
Sept 20, 1990

Dear Alan,

I read with interest your last column describing the centerline disparity between the engine and frame. I am enclosing a plate from the Commando Workshop Manual circa 1969 (page 7) which documents this fact. I have been trying to resolve this ever since I discovered it about five years ago. While

the shift in weight may be a problem, of greater concern in my mind is the fact that since the engine plates are centered on the engine this also puts the swingarm off center relative to the frame. If you refer to the workshop drawing, item "P" (the engine plates) are closer to "Q" (the frame mounts) on the left compared to those on the right, by about .300 inch by actual measurement. This implies that in order for the rear wheel to be aligned with the front either the spoke lacing has to be biased to one side, or the various spacers have to place the rear wheel off center in the swingarm. I don't think that either of these assumptions is correct (I realise the MKIII is spoked off center). I think the rear wheel is in fact designed to be centered in the swingarm.

Since my Norton is not stock, with a MKIII rear wheel in a 750 swing arm and laced by myself, I would appreciate any input on the correct way to align the wheels. If someone has a rear wheel assembly handy, perhaps they could make the measurement shown as "D" in the diagram below. Any flat surface such as a table saw can serve as a surface plate. The stock spacers and speedo drive must be in place, of course. (*Measure at opposite edges of the wheel and take the average, then flip the wheel with its spacers over and measure the other side the same way.*)

*Any difference between the two averages will be the offset-ed)*

On my bike I machined some new rear mounting spacers, with one .150"



thicker and one .150" thinner than the stock ones. This causes the whole subframe to rotate somewhat relative to the front isolastic (*probably less than 5 degrees*). Since I am using a Norvil headsteady I was able to reshim it to compensate for the slight shift. Finally, the rear wheel is aligned correctly with the front, with the consequence that the rear sprocket is misaligned slightly (*again less than 5 degrees*). I am just now replacing my standard Renold chain after about 16,000 miles, so the increase in wear is minimal.

I wouldn't recommend this fix for everyone especially if you have a standard head steady. I was reluctant at first to mess with the original design, but the modification was easy enough to install and I can tell you that the bike is stable up to triple digit speeds. Again, if anyone knows another "right" way to set up the Commando I would appreciate the discussion.

Sincerely,  
Pete Serrino

If I understand Pete's point correctly, the flaw in the Commando design is even more severe than I had thought. As built, if the wheels are aligned accurately to each other they will not only be offset from the engine centerline, they are also not parallel to the frame, so the bike goes down the road a bit sideways. This could definitely cause accelerated tire wear and might also contribute to unstable handling ("speed-wobbles") since the center of thrust is not perpendicular to the axis of rotation. Any comments?

Another letter on the subject comes from Steve Breacain:

Dear Alan,

Here's a copy of a Norton blueprint detail showing the front and rear isolastics and the offset in engine and frame. As you can see, this was an intentional design feature.

A footnote says "the engine offset and resulting pull to the left are in response to a parliamentary mandate dated 8 November 1967, and comprise an in-built safety feature. The death rate of British motorists pub-crawling through dense fog and then veering right into oncoming traffic has grown to embarrassing proportions. Phase one of this mandate requires all new vehicles of British manufacture to veer to the left by 5 degrees so that they will come to rest on the motorway verge rather than in oncoming traffic.

Phase two of this mandate will convert all roadways to one-way travel, progressing north from Greenwich in an anti-clockwise direction, the desired result being that pub-crawling motorists will drift gently towards the Midlands, at most taking out the odd cow of which there are too many. Phase two is scheduled to take effect on 1 January, 2001.

Because of this mandate, the PM has come under severe criticism from dismayed fans of British Iron, to which she replied "If you want precision, buy a watch".

Any time can help,  
Steve Breacain  
5274 Manila Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94618

p.s. I'd like to build a space-frame (triangulated multi tube design) for

Commando power train. If anyone out there can send photos or related info, I would appreciate it.

As an owner of a modern British motorcycle, I can attest that the "safety feature" described above is still being supplied at no extra charge by the industry. My Interpol II rotary has a definite leftward leaning and was drawn back to the Midlands as if by a magnet. (of course that's where the Norton factory is located too).

As far as Steve's ps. I saw an extraordinary Norton racer up at Sears Point last year, which featured a hand-made space frame and center-mounted alloy fuel tank. The engine was hung from the frame by the head, and there were no bottom tubes, which makes the engine a "stressed member". I believe the bike was built by Jim Schmidt of Fresno. Jim also publishes a set of workshop notes on Norton race tuning, including some very detailed tips for port contour and exhaust system dimensions. You can contact him at 582N. Golflinks Rd, Fresno CA 93727.

A final offside note on the frame-offset issue has been provided by I. Pushtit Holmes and is printed elsewhere in this issue. Since I.P. is a bit crooked (or is it bent?) himself, it's only fitting that he have the last word.

Last month Harry, John Covell and I checked out the Rally sites in South Shore. We all agreed that Camp Richardson was "it", and we also soundly rejected the Tahoe Valley Campground as an alternate site. At Harry's suggestion we took a tour of the Nevada side and discovered Zephyr Cove. This private campground offers some excellent facilities including a restaurant and store, but the actual

campground is a bit hilly and small for our needs, although it would do in a pinch and is therefore a good backup. Our proposal to Richardsons will go out this week.

There are still several jobs on the Rally Committee which need filling. The most important of these is Food and Concessions manager. Since there isn't a large restaurant at Richardsons, or even nearby, we will need to make arrangements with a catering service to set up a field kitchen and dining area. The Friday and Saturday banquets are traditional and will be included in the rally fee. Since it's about five miles from Richardsons to town, it would be very nice to offer breakfast and lunch on-site at a reasonable cost. I'd like to find a single caterer who would be willing to provide a party tent, tables and chairs for the entire rally, and serve breakfast and additional meals on a pay-per-order basis.

If you have some experience in the food service industry and know what to look for in terms of price and quality, please let me know. The job has two parts: a) finding and hiring the right catering service at a price we can afford, and b) planning the banquet menu and ensuring we get what is promised at rally time. It isn't a lot of work, and with an experienced person in charge, could add a great deal to the enjoyment and success of our Rally. Please think it over and contact me if you're the right person.

Our December Meeting will be the annual Christmas party and General Meeting, and will be held at Alice's Restaurant on Saturday, December 15th, 4-9 pm. It was a great party last year, so don't miss it.

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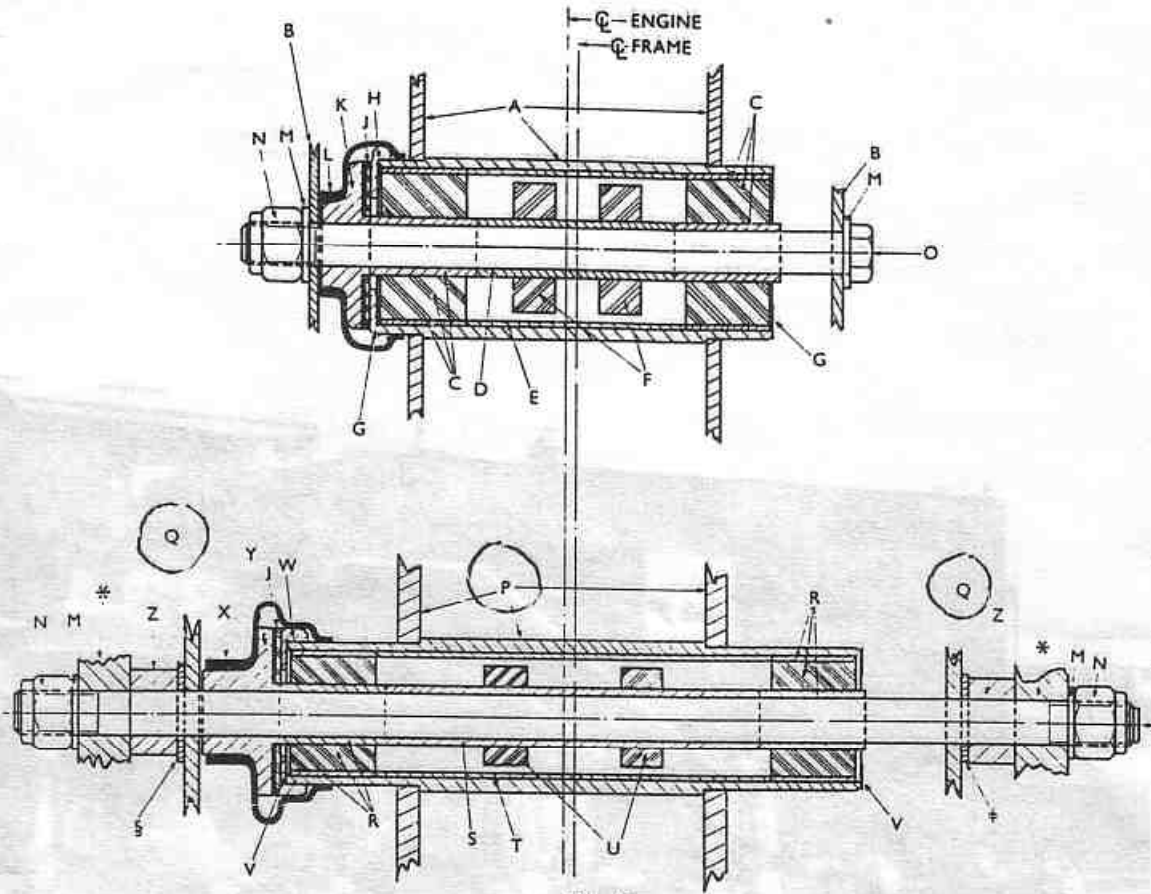
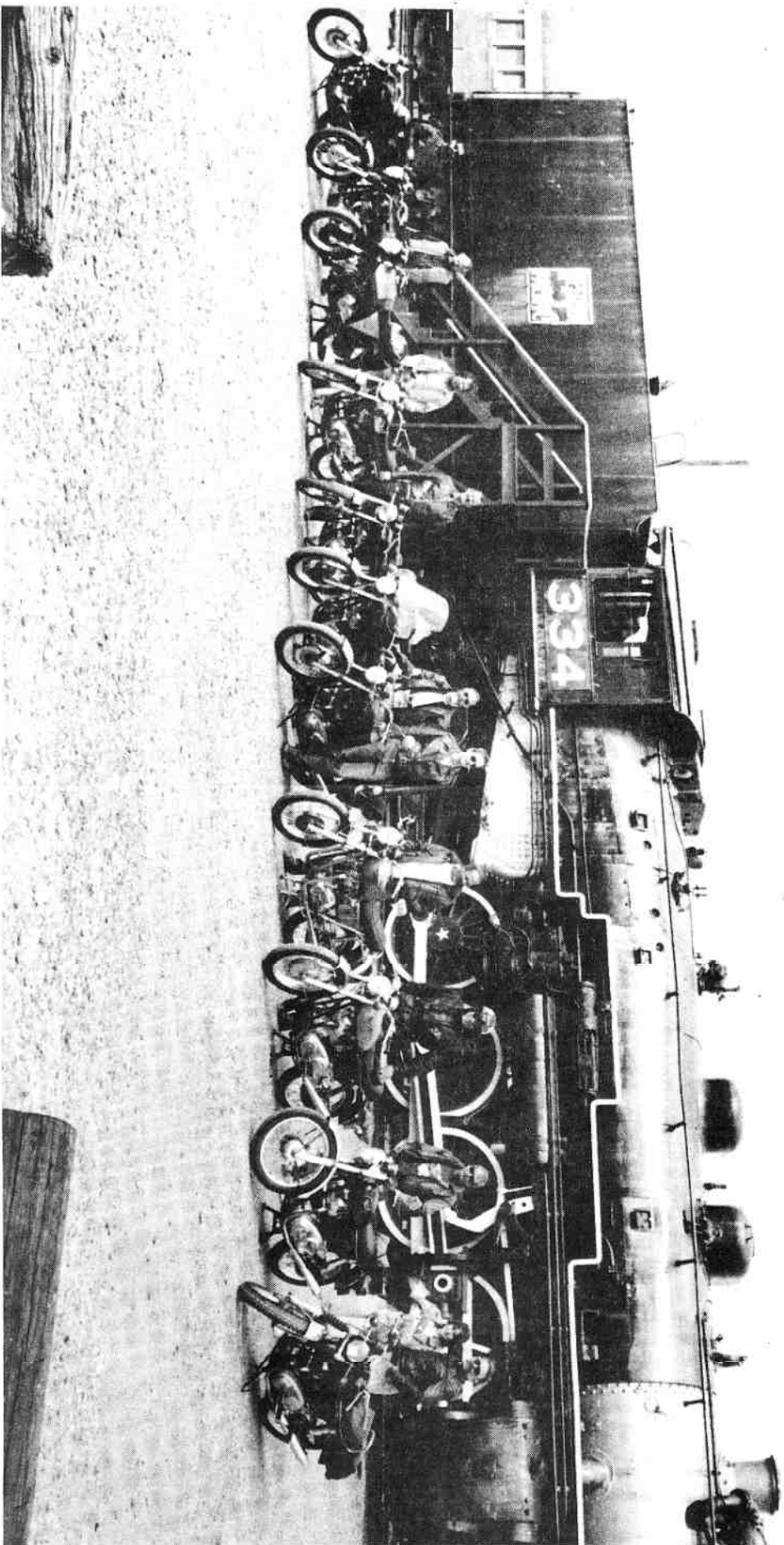


FIG. 35

A	06-0418	Front engine mounting assembled	1 off
B	06-0415	Frame front engine mounting plate	2 off
C	06-0421	Front engine mounting bush	2 off
D	06-0427	Metalastik spacer tube (front)	1 off
E	06-0771	Front engine mounting bearing spacer	1 off
F	06-0428	Front engine mounting rubber spacer	2 off
G	06-0686-9	Front engine mounting shim	as required
H	06-0684	Front engine mounting tube cap	1 each end—2 off
J	06-0578	Mounting plate shim (polyurethane)	1 each end—4 off
K	06-0422	Front mounting spacer (engine plates)	1 each end—2 off
L	06-0773	Front engine mounting gaiter	1 each end—2 off
M	000008	Washer	1 each end—4 off
N	06-0438	Nut	3 off
O	06-0423	Front engine mounting bolt	1 off
P	06-0424	Rear engine mounting assembled	1 off
Q	06-0414	Rear engine mounting plate (frame)	2 off
R	06-0432	Rear engine mounting bush	2 off
S	06-0434	Metalastik spacer tube (rear)	1 off
T	06-0772	Rear engine mounting bearing spacer	1 off
U	06-0435	Rear engine mounting rubber spacer	2 off
V	06-0775-8	Rear engine mounting shim	as required
W	06-0685	Rear engine mounting tube cap	1 each end—2 off
X	06-0774	Rear engine mounting gaiter	1 each end—2 off
Y	06-0436	Rear mounting spacer (engine plates)	1 each end—2 off
Z	06-0472	Spacer	1 each end—2 off
*	06-0468	Footrest support plate	2 off
†	06-0437	Rear engine mounting stud	1 off
‡	06-0831	Front support bracket R.H.	1 off
§	06-0832	Front support bracket L.H.	1 off





Big Iron and Bigger Iron: Club members posed in front of a 4-8-4 Side Value Triple Expansion Locomotive on the August Ride. Pictured from left: The Unknown NOC'er, Mike Burnam, a friend of Steve Famoliner on Ducati, Harry Bunting, Alan Goldwater, John Covell, Bob White, Lynn Miller, Steve Famoliner, Patrick and Dawn McDowell. Picture taken by Gerald Mauricio. Print made by Randy Zink.



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## Minutes of September Meet

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Alan Goldwater called the meeting to order at 8:45 pm at Harry's Hofbrau in Mountain View. After briefly noting his Mk III's health, Alan called attention to upcoming events on the calendar. A new East Bay venue was also announced, Bison Brewing in Berkeley, owned by a couple of Norton-owning brothers.

Vacancies in the roster of club officers were then described and volunteer candidates encouraged. The incumbents for the offices of President, Secretary/Treasurer and Notice Editor/Publisher do not plan to stand for office again.

Alan then began a discussion of the 1991 INOA Rally, to be held in the Lake Tahoe area in August. It will be big and fun. Harry Bunting then gave a report on the two potential campsites, one of which will be selected for the rally, set for July 30-August 3. Alan ran down the list of rally-preparation positions to be filled. The club will be supporting all the active participants' effort financially.

The ride schedule is in good shape. Members with ideas for good rides were asked to contact Ride Coordinators Don Danmeier or Lynn Miller. Alan remarked that a Technical Support Officer position would be good to post.

Marick Payton announced that there's still work to be done on the Rally bike Combat Norton, which is currently at Andy Belcher's house. Harry Bunting offered a new wiring harness. Good fork stanchions would be welcome.

Stan Beneveds said the new T-shirts are in preparation. We're still having problems getting British Racing Green tees. Alan offered his BRG prototype to the next club president. The idea of a satin-finish club jacket was briefly discussed. Harry reported that Leo Christianson has ordered the club pins. He also told us the the new NOC-UK calendar will be arriving in about a month.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm. Attendance was about 30, with many new members present.

—John Covell,  
Recording Secretary

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### Letters cont.

holes were not exactly in the center as they should be. They were slightly to the left. The junior draughtsman, however, thought that the engineer meant that the holes were a little too much towards the right, or "off-side." So he moved them even farther towards the left. Hence all this confusion about Nortons pulling to the left. All this information is recorded on original Norton stationery and is stored in London at the National Science Museum.

Sincerely,  
I. Pushtit Holme, B.R.G.

### Fellow NOC'ers:

Re discussion in this month's Wrench, I find swing arm and tire both centered on both my Commandos.

Marick Payton

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## Sec/Treas on Upcoming Election

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Our Northern California NOC is at 190 members, which is the highest since early 1988 and we have about \$1800 in the bank. We have great rides, high turnouts at all 4 meeting locations and a raffle bike worth about \$2K to the club. In addition, our club is hosting the 1991 USNOA rally at Lake Tahoe. I think the few people running this club are doing an outstanding job and our system of operation seems to work.

But every year around the December election meeting, nobody wants to run for the main club offices. Well, this year is a little different, the president, secretary/treasurer and possibly our editor/publisher are resigning after long stints in office. It's not that we're tired but the 1991 USNOA rally will keep us quite busy. Consequently, we need new club officers.

Without recognition or reward, there is no incentive to be a club officer. Since I want our club to continue to be successful, we need quality people willing to devote the time needed to do the job right. I propose we need a few changes in our election process and incentives to get more people to run for the offices. We certainly have money in the bank to provide some incentives. Here are my suggestions:

1) Have the election in November, instead of December. Current officers continue thru December.

2) The December meeting should be one grand party with free dinner for ALL club officers, old and new. Recognition for outstanding performance should be made with gift certificates and trophies voted on at earlier club meetings.

3) Continue free memberships in NOC, UKNOW and USNOA for the president, editor/publisher and secretary/treasurer.

4) One free Club T-shirt and club pin for ALL club officers on a yearly basis.

5) Our editor/publisher is the backbone of our club and I feel deserves the most reward. Not only should they collect any advertisement revenues from the Notice, the club should provide a \$100 gift certificate at the Norton shop of his or her choice every year.

6) Maximum of 3 years in any office. The only exception would be by vote at election time.

Those are my ideas and you may have even better ones! Please write the publisher with any comments you might have and let's discuss this at the October meeting. I'm not complaining and I'm not tooting my own horn, but our club needs your efforts if it is to continue successfully. Thanks,

Harry Bunting, Secretary/Treasurer

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## Art's Party, Old Timers' Ride: A Great Weekend for NOC'ers

The weekend of September 15 and 16, 1990, has to be entered in the Norton book of records as the best weekend ever. Start with the weather being absolutely perfect. Warm and sunny with just a hint of fall and a clear blue California sky. Add Art and Ann Sirota's Norton Club picnic on Saturday. A fantastic well attended event (lot's of new members present) that had a line of Nortons that stretched out of the driveway and into the street. The combination of gracious hosts, great food and a large crowd of smiling faces made time pass all too quickly.

Art, of course, insisted that we look over his collection of bikes and inspect the progress on the 500T, beautiful. He also offered a sampling of the songs on his new Norton album to an enthusiastic crowd.

I had some doubts about the Old Timers' Ride following the Sirota event but was pleasantly surprised upon arriving at Alice's on Sunday morning. I rode down from San Francisco with my neighbor and the weather was a carbon copy of Saturday. He rode his 1951 Panther and I rode my 1953 ES2/19R Special. Phil and Art both arrived on their old Nortons. After breakfast we left for the ride and found that we had a Vincent with sidecar to follow and pick up the bits. We had a long string of Commandos behind and it was a great turnout, with some more new members riding along.

This was, after all, the Old Timers' Ride and Phil reminded us of this by falling off his bike. Geritol is the answer, Phil.

We took Alpine Road and then down to San Gregorio where we had a photo session at the old gas station. These photos will appear in a later issue.

It was a good ride and those of us that could get away with two Norton days in one weekend could not have picked a better one.

Once again, thank you Art and Ann.  
PS: If you missed any of this you really blew it.

—Lynn Miller





## Brit Bikes Featured in Cycle Mags

*Motorcyclist* magazine's October edition features stories on the Norton F1 and on the new Triumph motorcycles, reports NOC member Richard Stevenson. "Norton has put on the road a bike that undeniably has a few raw edges but which is pushing at the cutting edge of 1990's motorcycling technology—and doing so with a style and a power plant all its own. Perhaps best of all, Norton is currently setting up U.S. distribution and plans to sell bikes in the United States in less than a year," the magazine reports.

Most of the information on the F1 will be familiar to NOC'ers but the in-depth review of the (probably six) new

Triumph models will be interesting reading for any enthusiast of British motorcycles. The article is accompanied by some excellent photos. The various models are variants of three and four-cylinder machines, each having a long- and short-stroke version. A very high percentage of the mechanical parts are interchangeable across all machines.

The November issue of *Cycle World* also has some interesting reading for Brit bike enthusiasts, a feature on the Santa Cruz Rockers, including some brief commentary by an original Rocker, our own Phil Radford. It also includes a one-page feature on the new Triumphs.

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## NORTON OWNERS CLUB

### 1991 CLASSIC CALENDAR

Published in England by the NOC, this very high quality production is now in its eighth edition. Measuring 16x12 inches, it contains 13 full colour photographs of Nortons 11x7 inches, complete with full and informative captions.

Bikes included this time are: Commander, 16H, JPN, Commando 'S', Model 99, ES2, Atlas, Inter, Model 19, Fastback and the very latest in the long Norton line, the F1. A unique extra to the NOC Calendar is the information page, this time featuring a specially written article on the history of the Dommi engine from its debut on the Model 7 through to its final Commando version.

Printed on fine quality art paper and hung on a wire spiral, each page is just flipped over as required, no rip offs here! Truly the best quality and value in motorcycle calendars and it is 100% Norton. A must for every discerning Norton owner and enthusiast, at the very reasonable price of \$11 per copy, post paid. Don't go into 1991 without a copy upon your wall. Order now for prompt dispatch. Ideal Xmas/New Year present for all your motorcycling friends.

The Norton Owners Club  
1165 Crandano Court,  
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

## Classifieds

FOR SALE: 1. Dunstall dual disc with master cylinder, Borrani rim and new TT 100/K81, \$300 OBO. 2. Dunstall 2 into 1 into 2 exhaust, complete, \$150 OBO. Will take \$400 for both. Call Mike at (415) 538-7147 after 6 pm. /10

FOR SALE: 1975 Mk III 850 parts. One complete bike, disassembled, 2 partial bikes, all low mileage. Includes 3 engines, 3 trans, 1 frame, 1 pink slip, 2 tanks (1 roadster, 1 racing), 5 wheels, 3 forks with brakes, 2-1/2 primaries. \$2,500 takes all. Call Steve (415) 652-2549, evenings. /9

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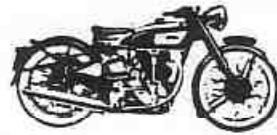
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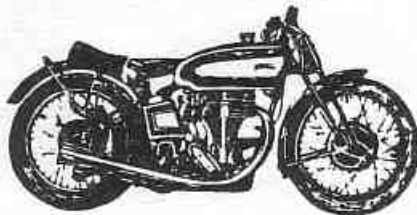
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