



Norton Notice



The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club

No. 142

Feb. 1990



Merry Christmas! Harry Bunting, John Covell and Alan Goldwater display the Christmas Cake at the Club Party at Alice's.



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

\$15.00 per year **88**

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

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Important!

(Please take note of the following fine print.)

The object of the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage and develop all 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.

Upcoming Events

Events

Sat Feb 17 First monthly Raffle Bike Wrench-Off. Call Andy Belcher for details (415) 322-4054

208 O'Keefe

Club Rides

- March 11 (Sun.) East Bay Ride
- April 15 (Sun.) Easter Morning Ride
Mt. Tam
- May 13 (Sun.) Delta Ride (Locke)
- June 16-17 (Sat.-Sun.)
Sierra Ride/Chili Cook-Off
(Jointly w/ BSAOC)
- July 15 (Sun.) South Bay Ride
(tentative)
- Aug. 11-12 (Sat.-Sun.)
Dutch Flat Overnighter
- Sept. 16 (Sun.) Old-Timer's Ride
(Meet at Alice's)
- Oct. 14 (Sun.) Pumpkin Ride (tentative)
- Nov. 3 (Sat.) Northbay All-British Ride
(Members only) w/ Ariel, BSA,
& Enfield Owners
- Dec. 16 (Sun.) Mt. Hamilton
(tentative)

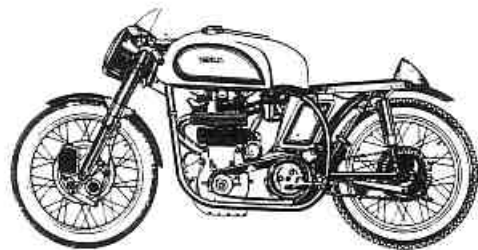
Meeting Schedule

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. locations. (counterclockwise, right?)

February 8 -- East Bay
Gino's Pizza
2629 Ashby (near College Ave)
Berkeley, CA
Upstairs seating, good food, bottled beer only.

March 8 -- San Francisco
Lake Merced Boathouse. Off Skyline Blvd. Great food, nice room with big-screen cycle racing videos and a lingere show!

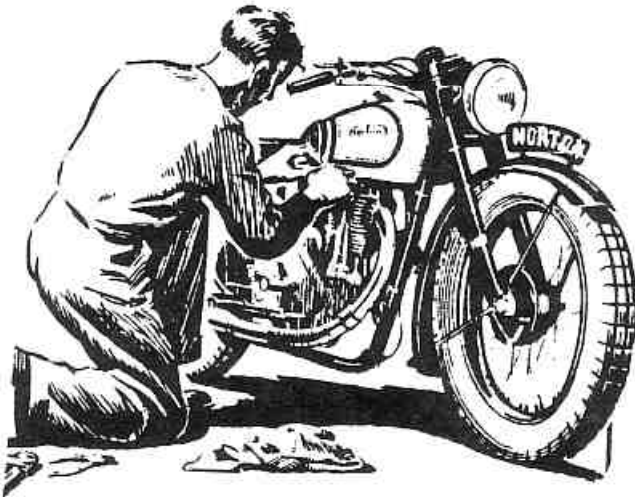
April 12 -- Peninsula
The Prince of Wales Pub on 25th Ave in San Mateo offers a wide selection of beers and a private meeting room with dart boards!



1963 catalog drawing of Manx 30M and 40M

Alan's Wrench

Tech Tips and Gossip from the Editor



With great relief and anticipation I hereby announce my resignation as President of the club. Harry Bunting is also resigning as Secretary-Treasurer. Now that I have your attention, let me also say that these resignations are effective Dec. 1, 1990, which allows plenty of time for you, the members of the club, to take over these responsibilities. This is my second year as President and Harry's third as Secretary, and enough's enough!

I should mention that in addition to doing all the financial record-keeping and membership renewals, Harry has been printing labels and mailing the Notice each month. And if that's not enough, he has also been serving as U.S. distributor of the NOC Calendar. So the next time you see Harry Bunting, tell him what a great job he's doing, he's earned it.

To top off his service to all of us in the club, Harry has been storing and working on the club's raffle bike. Last weekend he got it running after a quick carb rebuild. Harry says it runs great, although the frame is seriously bent under the tank, and the lights don't light.

Harry also says "move it", and so this weekend our '71 Roadster goes to Andy Belcher's house for disassembly. A tentative wrenching party is scheduled for Saturday, Feb 17th (see Upcoming Events pg 3) Andy will be polishing the cases and Art Sirota will help out with the frame problem. We also have the following items to deal with:

- Speedo/tach cables (or gauges?)
- Wiring harness (replace)
- Switches and lights (test, repair)
- Wheels & bearings (grease & true)
- Brakes (flush system and inspect)

We're very fortunate in that the mechanicals seem to be ok, even the clutch! We may need shocks, tires, and certainly a battery. If you have parts or service to donate to the cause, give me a call. (408-475-7505).

By the way, Andy plays in a blues band called New Direction. They are playing at the Club Ante' off B Street in San Mateo, Sundays through March. He also does the best polishing in town, judging by the mirror surfaces of his MKIII engine and cases.

Speaking of tires, I had a flat last weekend. I was riding with Susan down

to Moss Landing for lunch and it was a beautiful ride until a 10-24 bolt somehow made it through a brand new (less than 200 miles) K491 and a brand new Dunlop tube. I didn't notice a thing until we slowed down at the spot where Route 1 narrows down to two lanes just south of Watsonville. All of a sudden the bike wouldn't steer. The back end kept trying to drift off to the shoulder. Maybe what they say about the centrifugal force keeping the tire round is TRUE. Well, I had just put a new patch kit in the tank bag, and I had a good tool kit with tire irons, but ohmigod, where's the pump!

To make a long story short, a nice guy named Mack stopped on a Beemer R90RS (honest, Louis!), and took Susan to get the pump which I forgot to move from the Rotary. She also grabbed a new tube, since I had one on the shelf. The job only took 30 minutes, since the tire was new and thus nice and pliable. The pump I have is a Mt. Zefal mountainbike pump which can inflate a motorcycle tire much faster than a 10-speed size one, and is still compact and light enough to fit in a tank bag. Highly recommended - but Don't Leave Home Without It!

In December I told you about my troubles with the EPA regarding my attempt to certify the Norton Interpol II which I brought back from England last summer. Since then, I wrote to the EPA requesting waiver and/or clarification of the testing procedures. I have just received an encouraging reply, as follows:

"... the regulation specifies that a dynamometer roll diameter of at least 0.4 meter is necessary and it must be a single roll dynamometer. There is no provision

for the use of any other type. However, if justification for the use of a different type is made ...proving that it is essentially equivalent...EPA may approve the use of an equivalent dynamometer."

I also asked the EPA about the mileage accumulation which the spec requires to be run on a standard 11 mile urban driving course. They replied: "For the small volume manufacturer the mileage accumulation schedule may be one which more closely represents the expected driving habits of the ultimate purchaser." In other words, just get out there and ride it!

It now appears that I will be able to actually certify the bike provided of course that it passes the emissions test. As a first step in that direction, I've been rebuilding the SU carbs. I am very impressed with the design elegance and overall quality of these type HIF units, by the way. There are only two jet sizes (.080 and .100) for these carbs, and tuning is accomplished by the contour of the slide needle, which is specified at sixteen points along its length. This permits a far more sophisticated and accurate control of mixture than simply changing the jet hole.

After some research, I am using the jet needles specified for 1974-80 MGB's which are readily available locally and have a greater spread between idle and cruise throttle positions than the stock needles. This will enable me to set the idle mixture very lean without the bike becoming unrideable. I hope to schedule another test session toward the end of this month. Then provided it passes, I need to accumulate about 9000 miles as quickly as possible. Any one interested in riding to Mardi Gras?

Santa's Old Nort

by Art Sirota

'twas the week before Christmas
and Santa was nervous
his Big four had been
a full year out of service

and he needed that motorbike
running like new
to deliver his packages
all the night through

so he donned his red earmuffs
and black leather jacket
and left his warm toy shop
;while his elves made a racket

out to the back shed
all covered with snow
where Santa's discarded
old playtoys did go

and there in the corner
'neath piles of old shoes
stood Santa's red Norton
a full year unused

a puddle of oil
marked the spot where it leaned
and the dust on its seat
proved it hadn't been cleaned

the matching red sidecar
had a very flat tyre
and though the engine turned
over
it just wouldn't fire

the speedo was broken
its glass cracked and shattered
but the altimeter mostly
to Santa Claus mattered

for this was a special bike a
and here's reason why
it was one real old Norton
that literally could fly!

the horn never worked right
the carb throttle stuck
the spokes were all tarnished
and covered with muck

the mag was a mess
so the headlight was dim
some spokes had been broken
there was a kink in one rim

the cables were frayed
the handlebars bent
and the type pump missing
(no one knew where it went)

yes there had been a time
when eight famous reindeer
had pulled Santa through
year after year

but then Santa's insurance
had simply gone through the roof
when his policy rating
became based on each hoof

plus increased liability
and the high cost of hay
and eight reindeer make such a
mess
as they pulled Santa's sleigh

so now Santa got busy
with not a minute to spare
he plugged in his compressor
and filled each tyre with air

the journals got turned
the float bowl got lapped
the head was de-coked
and the points got re-gapped

the carb got boiled out
and the cables got oiled
for six days and nights
in his shed Santa toiled

soon the gas tank was gleaming
with Santa's own special wax
and he even paid up
his bike's current road tax

the presents were piled
in the sidecar so high
even Santa was worried
this old rig might not fly

so as everyone watched
Santa gave it a kick
and it started right up
hence the phrase "in good Nick"

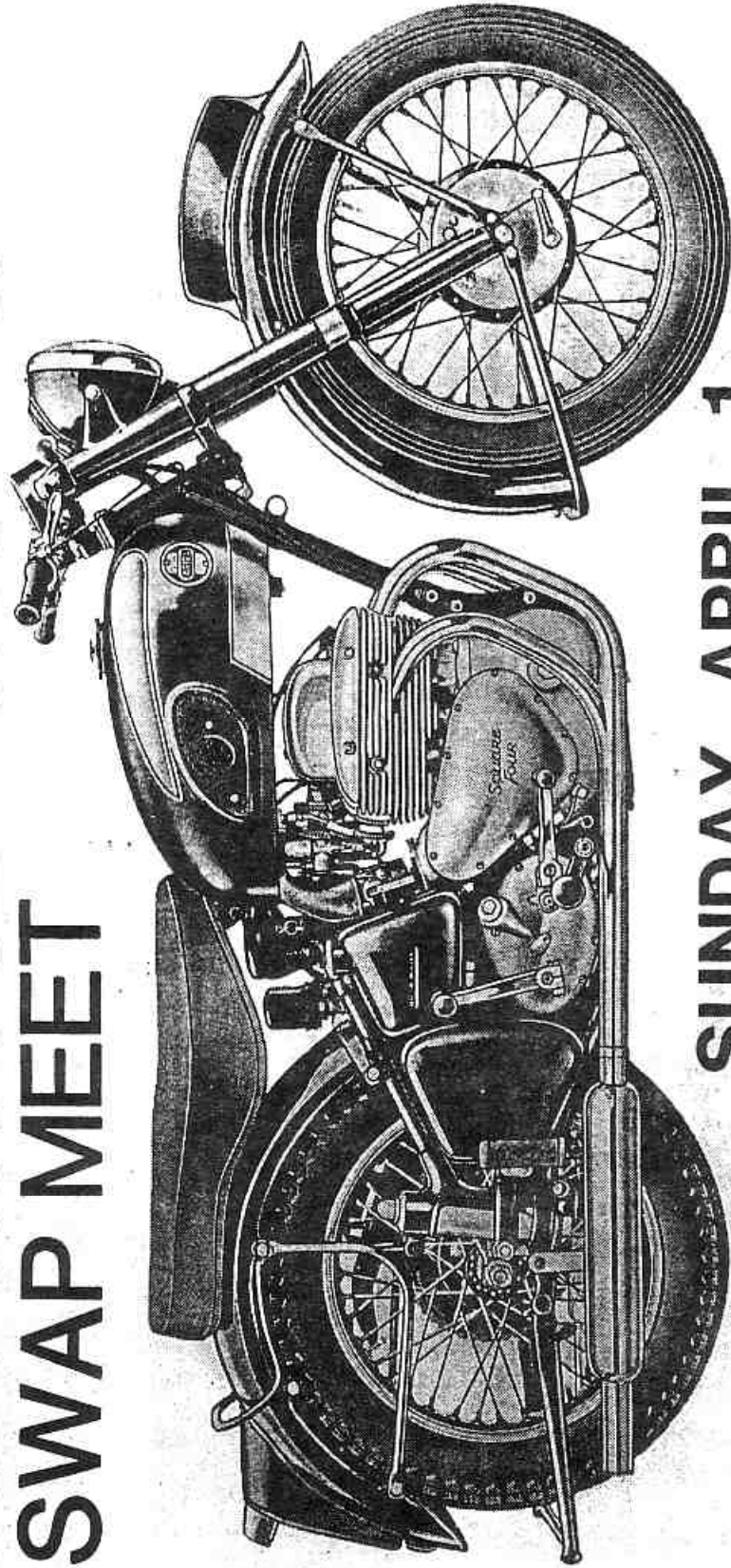
and his laughter grew loud
he was such a jolly bloke
and he soon disappeared
in a cloud of blue smoke

"I've learned my lesson well"
his last words shouted gaily
"Merry Christmas to all!
and keep your bike maintained
daily!!"

©Art Sirota

*[No part of this poem may be
reprinted without written
permission of the author.]*

**THE THIRD ANNUAL
CLUBMAN'S ALL-BRITISH
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Don Danmeier 415-897-6145 (days) or 415-898-0330 (eves to 9)**

ALL ENTRIES/CHECKS PAYABLE TO: BSAOC, P.O. BOX 594, NOVATO, CA 94948

The Joys of Oil Changing

by Robert E. Kroll

©January 21, 1990

When I purchased my 1975 Commando Interstate last April, the seller, who will remain nameless to protect me from any libel charges, made a comment that always stuck with me. Showing me the oil filter element, he noted proudly that "when you do an oil change on the Mark III you really feel like you're doing something for the bike." I didn't think much of the comment at the time, but I am fairly rigid about regular oil changes. I try to change the oil at least every six months or twelve thousand miles whether it needs it or not.

My Interstate seemed a bit lonely the other night, so I delved into the project of replenishing the Castrol GTX 20-50.

I use the word "project" advisedly. The first time I tried to change the oil, I was unaware of the Norton's dry sump design and was very disappointed when I uncorked the inch-and-a-half plug at the bottom of crankcase and got about enough oil to fill a large shot-glass. Mean Marshall patiently explained the dry sump and directed me to the reservoir hidden behind a side cover.

Changing oil on a Mark III is a project like washing the cat or cleaning the crumbs out of the toaster: it can be very satisfying if done carefully, but potentially frustrating, painful and very messy.

I counted eight bolts, nuts, plugs, screws, clamps, sleeves and canisters, that must be removed and replaced to accomplish the job on a Norton Commando MKIII. Three sizes of box wrenches (Whitworth and inches), a screwdriver, two huge sockets (1-1/2 and 1-1/8 inches), and an extra-small (metric?) filter wrench, a drain pan, six yards of oil rags, a Sunday edition of the Los Angeles Times, a funnel, and a three-quart pan are all that is needed to get the job done right.

The main drain plug gets oil on the lane (though not the chain), the plane, and half of Spain. Nice concept. I found a small flexible plastic funnel ("Le Funnel") at Grand Auto for \$.99 (the Genuine Norton Part for the purpose works beautifully, but at \$69.95 is a bit much) that I can wedge up under the oil tank and direct the stream of thick, black Texas tea over the side of the bike and the exhaust pipe into a drain pan... unless it slips, which it does every OTHER time.

So, getting back to the case at hand... I performed my oil change the other night while my son watched with a wry "why don't you get a Honda" smirk on his face. The boy is an ingrate.

All went well (or so I thought) until the next morning when I took off for work, outfitted in my light tan Miami Vice suit. About two miles into the trip, I noticed a bit of slippage in the rear end of the Commando as I made a left-hand corner at 5 mph. Having seen no oil slick,

I knew something was up (or more likely, going down). Pulling over and looking under the bike, there was an ominous, steady stream of thick green fluid oozing from the underside of the rear of the engine.

I parked the bike in front of an independent Saab repair shop.

Thinking fast, I flagged down a Nigerian taxi driver (I didn't realize he was Nigerian until I got into the cab and he took off in the opposite direction from what I had directed, explaining, "You in no hurry, man? I've gotta get some gaahs."). We sped back to my house. I changed into a darker suit and black shoes (a better Winter ensemble anyway) and returned to the scene of the skid with my filter wrench, screwdriver, extra oil, and a spray can of brake cleaning fluid to hose down the oil-covered rear brake disk and tire. The operation went well and I'd only lost two quarts on the trip downtown. I raced over to the do-it-yourself auto laundry and thoroughly hosed down the bike with hot soapy water.

On later inspection, I discovered that the gasket from the old filter had remained wedged in by the new filter, making it impossible to crank down manually. Moral: never change your oil; in the dark.

When I got to my office late that day, my secretary looked at me and commented, dangerously, "Gosh, your hair looks funny." I'm proud to say that I resisted the desire to strap the filter wrench around her neck. All I could say was, "It was a difficult morning."

Notes from Margie

NORTONS FEATURED IN JAPANESE M/C MAGAZINE

The Japanese are promoting Norton! *Clubman*, "enthusiastic motorcycle magazine," is a Japanese motorcycle magazine that puts *Cycle World* to shame. It's about 12 by 9 and a quarter inches, half an inch thick, drippingly gorgeous color printed on thick glossy stock.

Issue #44 has about thirty pages devoted to Nortons, past and future, from the 1950 Featherbeds to the F1. For some reason the headlines are in English, but the text is in Japanese, so I can't read what they have to say about our bikes.

I'm planning to bring this issue to Gina's to show around. If anybody can read Japanese, a translator would be appreciated.

NORTONS AT THE TRACK

The club racing star, Eric Swortzfigure, will renew his attack on the lap speed at Sears Point this year. Note to race fans: speed costs money. Assistance would be appreciated. . . .

WHERE HAS MARGIE GONE?

Several people have noticed I haven't been at club events, and I don't even owe them any money. The explanation is that I have been incredibly busy with work. Thanks to Maya for taking over the Vice Presidency. -- Margie Siegal

Raffle Bike Status Report

by Harry Bunting

The club's 72 Commando raffle bike sat around so long that I felt inspired to see if I could make it run again and also to have it move on to the next establishment for cosmetic enhancement before we raffle it off!

From attached receipts I noticed that somebody named Joel Kilbourn spent a sizeable \$1000+ at Mean Marshall's in 1984 to rebuild the engine. The battery was kaput but my Norton had a useable battery, so I stuck it in. Then I checked the spark by pulling one of the plug wires, placing it near the engine and stomping on the kickstart with the key on. I had spark but it wouldn't start. I opened the gas tank and smelled, yuk! I drained the gas tank and filled it with fresh stuff. Alan Goldwater lent me a can of CHEM-DIP and I cleaned the carbs. The bodies and slides are still in good condition. I installed a fuel line I had lying around and put it back together.

I assumed the oil in the tank had migrated to the engine but there was still some new looking oil in the tank. VAR-ROOOOM!!! It started on the 10th kick. Boy was I pissed; this thing vibrated less than my Norton. Now I have to work on my bike! The oil tank filled itself up. I added some 90 weight oil to the transmission and checked inside the primary cover. Everything looked good.

Now for the test drive. The engine

sounds good; clutch is ok; steering is a bit shaky and the swing arm is loose. The frame is bent and it needs some cosmetic work; but overall the bike is fixable.

One thing the bike needs is a new wiring harness, especially since it has no lights and some of the wiring looks frayed. By the way, I am an electrical engineer, so I worry too much about these kinds of things.

Any Belcher has volunteered to do some polishing work on the bike and we need other people to do various things as required. The bike has moved to Andy's house and you can reach him at (415) 322-4054. Now, doesn't this sounds like a fun project.

Roster Corrections

Maya Lai
1370 McKendrie
San Jose, CA 95126
(408) 241-4615

Don Danmeier
(415) 897-6145 (days)
(415) 898--330 (eves)

Eric Hjertberg
233 Belmont
Redwood City, CA 94061
(415) 364-6397

18-Inch Wheels

Should you ever change your 19-inch rear to an 18-incher and sport a modern rubber compound (both front and rear), you'll probably find that even though traction has greatly improved, the steering has become slow and lethargic. An improvement I've found to revitalize steering input is to go to a 13-1/4' pair of shocks (stock Girlings being 12.9"). This not only straightens the fork angle, but also transfers weight to the front (improves traction) as well as improves ground clearance (so you can take full advantage of the modern rubber).

However, there are negative side effects. Short people might need high heel boots, and, with low bars, wrists tend to become arthritic.

Custom length shocks are available from Alf Hagan, a true professional I can't thank enough. Two and a half weeks from letter of request to finding a surprise on my doorstep! And, he's responded quickly more than once.

—Chris Nichols

Classifieds

FOR SALE: early roadster fiberglass tail light assembly, used, very good condition. \$10. Art Sirota. (415) 327-3167 /2

FOR SALE: Norton Combat 750cc. Rare, original, correct. \$3250. Call Bruce. 861-4414 (days), 661-2532 (eves). /1

January Minutes

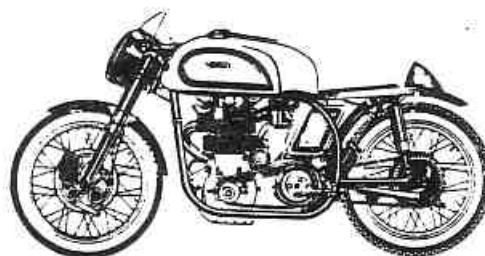
The January club meeting was held the 11th at Harry's Hofbrau in Mountain View. For some reason, many members arrived even more tardy than usual but the group finally grew to a respectable 22.

Allan made an early warning announcement that both he and Harry would be retiring from their positions at the end of this year. Not only do they feel they have paid their dues as President and Secretary/ Treasurer, respectively, they also want to be free to focus their energies on preparation for the 1991 INOA rally, which our club is hosting. The point of this announcement, of course, is to encourage early recruitment of candidates for the December election of new officers.

Harry Bunting announced that he was working to get the Rally Bike running so it could make the move to Andy Belcher's garage on its own power. Current thinking is that the bike will be raffled off at the Dick Mann rally next fall.

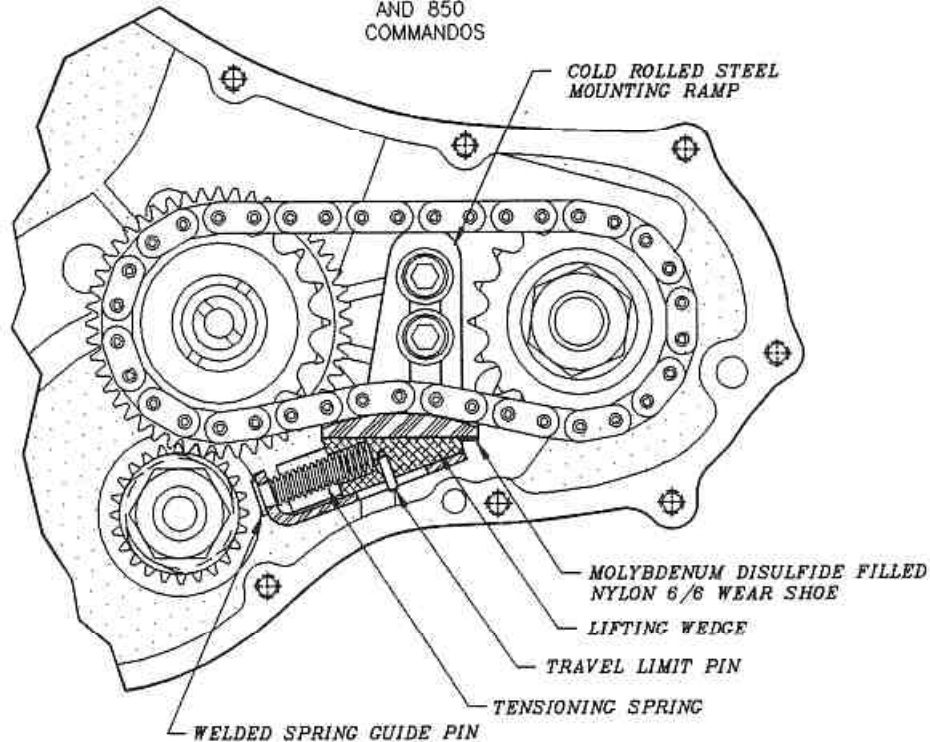
Tom Terry announced that he had gotten adapters made to enable use of Fram oil filters on a Norton and has some for sale.

—Marick Payton



1963 catalog drawing of Maxx 30M and 40M

paid advertisement

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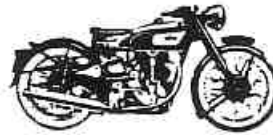
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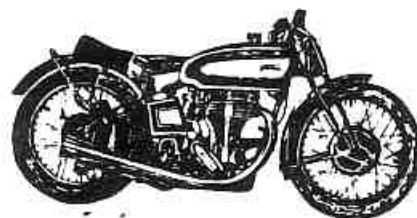
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