



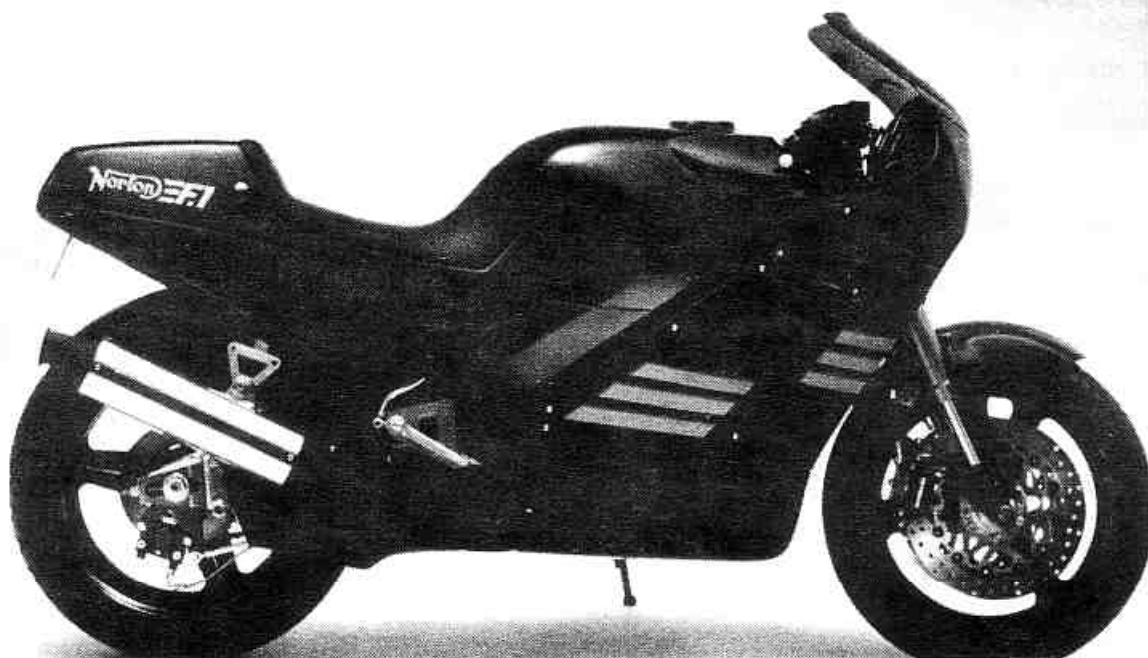
Norton Notice



The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club

No. 143

Mar. 1990



The new Norton F-1: "Over 90 orders have been take so far," according to Le Roux.



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** **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 \$19.00 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.

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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

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?)

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

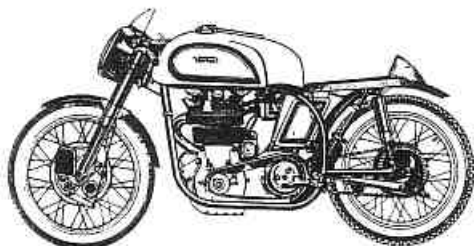
April 12 -- Peninsula The Prince of Wales Pub on 25th Ave in San Mateo offers a wide selection of beers and a private meeting room with dart boards!

Special Events

Clubman's All-British Motorcycle Show and Swap Meet, Sunday, April 1, San Jose (See center spread for details.)

Monterey Rally of European Motorcycles, Sunday, April 29 (See Alan's Wrench for details.)

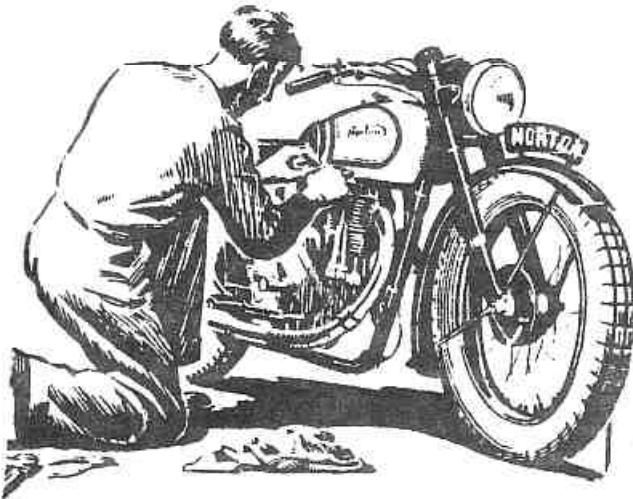
CNOA-USNOA National Rally, July 18-21, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin (See page 10.)



1963 catalog drawing of Manx 30M and 40M

Alan's Wrench

Tech Tips and Gossip from the Editor



This month I have to tell you about a lot of things that didn't happen. For starters, I didn't go on the North Bay ride last month and haven't heard from anyone that did. I hope it was a good ride for those of you who made it. In fact, between the weather and my work schedule, I didn't get to ride at all this month. Maybe that's why I'm feeling a bit grumpy right now. Marick, who usually bikes to work every day hasn't been able to ride at all either, due to a knee repair. You've got my sympathy bro.

I haven't run the EPA test on the rotary yet, but I did schedule it for this coming Thursday, so if you make it to the Club meeting that night, you will hear first-hand how it went. I'm pretty confident at this point as the bike is running way leaner than the last test, but there's always a chance that it won't pass. I sure

hope it does though. If not, the next step has got to be technically serious, like maybe a catalytic converter. Or I could give up....

The All-British Clubmans show is coming up real soon, and I haven't heard from anyone except Margie who plans to help with our stand there. Burton Kranzel offered to organise it some months ago but I haven't heard from him since then. Of course I haven't tried to call him either, so I shouldn't be surprised. If our attendance is as good as it was last year, there will be no shortage of people to help, so I'm not really worried. Stan Beneveds will be bringing the shirts and whatever else we have to sell, and I'll bring the club banners. I hope to see a nice assortment of Nortons on display, particularly some singles and one or more race bikes, but no one responded to my request a few months ago so there won't be a club-sponsored display.

Another upcoming event didn't make it into the calendar last month. On Sunday, April 29th is the seventh annual Monterey Rally of European Motorcycles, organised by Rick Nagle and Gerry Reynolds who are both members of this club. The poker run leaves the Monterey Fairgrounds at 9 AM, finishing around 1PM. The awards and raffle will be held at around 3 PM, after a bargecue lunch. For details contact Rick Nagle at (408) 336-2344 or Gerry Reynolds at (408) 373-8197. This event has always been fun for me and I highly recommend it.

I have written several times about the

1991 International Norton Rally which we will be hosting. In particular I asked for some help in finding a rally site in the Sierra region. So far the only reply I've gotten has been a card from Steve Coburn suggesting Laguna Seca. Thanks for the thought Steve, but last time I checked, the Sierra region didn't extend as far as Monterey. Steve also asks that I pass along his new address and phone number: 25 Hackett Blvd, Albany, NY 12208 (518) 436-9257. Give him a call if you're in the area.

I identified several promising sites from the list in the November notice, but I haven't written to any of them yet. I did visit Greg Pichon, a USNOA member from South Lake Tahoe whom I met at the rally in Canada last summer. Greg says the best bet in Tahoe is Camp Richardson (not in the original list). It was closed for the winter at the time of my visit, but looks to be on the west side of town, right by the lake. I also drove by the Tahoe Pines Campground which is a bit farther out of town, but still a good location. Now if I could just get around to writing those letters...

While I'm on the subject of rallies, I noticed that there is no annual rally scheduled for the club this year. The turnout for this traditional event was exceptional in the early 80's, with Pinecrest ('84?) marking the attendance peak at about 60. The past three rallies have been lightly attended (less than 20 members appeared this year) and so perhaps its time to let this event fade away. Or perhaps the Dutch Flats overnighter in August is meant to be it, since that is the usual time. In any case, I definitely won't be pushing for a club rally this year, so if you want one, you'll simply have to do it yourselves.

My personal priority rally-wise is the the INOA Annual in Wisconsin, July 18-23. I will be riding the Rotary there in the

company of at least one other Norton if things go according to plan. There are at least two other national-scale rallies in the Midwest that same month, so I'm hoping to leave a few days early and do some "party hopping". And of course the 50th annual Sturgis Rally in South Dakota, where upwards of 50,000 motorcycles are expected, is the first week in August, so that pretty much dictates the northern route for the return trip.

Last month I announced the retirement of myself and Harry Bunting from the running of the club, effective the First of December. I haven't changed my mind, and there hasn't been even a glimmer of interest from anyone in taking over either position. Maybe the club will run itself next year. Harry and I have talked it over and we have some ideas but since they involve blackmail I can't mention any names in print. It would be nice if some of you show some interest earlier than the AGM in December, but it probably won't happen.

Now don't get the wrong idea from all my negative comments: the club is alive and well, the monthly rides and meetings have been exceptionally well attended lately, and new people are continually joining the NOC fraternity here in the Bay Area. Last year I rode almost 10,000 miles on various Nortons, and count 1989 as one of the best years I've ever enjoyed. My frustration stems rather from a lack of time and energy to do everything the club deserves. This in turn dilutes my enthusiasm for the job. If I don't get support and positive feedback, I start to feel that my efforts are wasted, which makes a vicious circle. Mostly though, it's the mid-winter doldrums. Of course we really need the rain, but other than that, summer can't come too soon to suit me.

Art at the Motorcycle Auction

by Art Sirota

I attended the vintage motorcycle auction held in Santa Monica on February 10 and 11 and found that it was everything its promoters claimed it would be.

It was billed as "the largest and finest collections of Antique, Vintage, Classic and Special Interest Motorcycles ever available on the west coast . . ." there were hundreds of gorgeous, polished, well-bred beauties which nearly caused my eyes to pop out of my head. There were also some very pretty motorcycles! The Santa Monica Civic Auditorium is a huge indoor place and there were Gold Stars, old Indians, and sparkling Harleys everywhere.

Here's the way it all worked. There were two options offered to sellers. You could sell your bike "Reserve" or "No Reserve." Reserve meant that you had set a minimum amount of money to sell your machine and would not take less. No Reserve meant that the bike would go to the highest bidder no matter how low that bidder might be. So the main ingredients of any ordinary sale were present: sellers wanted to get as much money as possible for their bike, buyers looking for a great deal, and salespeople wanting to move The Product.

Now, for some mysterious reason which I never figured out, the exact amount of any seller's Minimum Reserve was

some kind of Sacred Secret. No seller would let anyone know what his Minimum Reserve was for his machine. The auctioneer would not begin the bidding by telling the audience what any Minimum Reserve was. However, if the bidding didn't reach the Minimum Reserve, the bike would remain unsold. Only then would the auctioneer announce to the crowd what the Minimum Reserve was. Sounds to me like a crazy way to waste a lot of people's valuable time.

But it was fun! The nervous looks on the faces of people hoping to get a good price for their machines, the sweaty brow of the auctioneer as he worked to move those motorcycles as quickly as possible across the auction block, the frantic movements of the obnoxious prompters as they tried to coax bidders to raise their bid just one hundred dollars, and the perplexed expressions on the faces of the bidders who did not know how to speak English as they tried to understand what was happening, all this made for some very interesting people-watching.

The auctioneer's microphone was turned up to about 300 decibels, and both auctioneers coincidentally had the same speech impediment. They both seemed to have a bad stutter. ("B-b-b-b-bid-a-hundred dollah bid-a-bid-a-bid . . .") None of the auctioneers knew anything about bikes, which made for some lively moments, like when they called the Honda Gold-

wing Tourer a "fine automobile," which had more truth in it than they knew.

It cost \$7 to get in. This information, which I consider important, was conveniently left out of the advertisements for this event. Parking was an additional \$3. But it was quite a show. One problem, however, was that if you were considering the purchase of one of these bikes, you had no way to tell what kind of mechanical condition it was in besides the owner's word. Owners have not always been known to give the most objective opinions. So it was very possible to pay top-dollar for an old bike and discover, too late, that you were in for a major rebuild.

Also, a big deal was made every time a machine was presented for sale with its title. Hey guys!!! Guess what? You'd have to be crazy to buy a bike from a complete stranger if it didn't have its title! These weren't crates of oranges. These weren't fat cows. These were motorcycles that had to be registered at the DMV. I can just see myself explaining to the indifferent agent at the DMV how the former owner auctioned off the bike to the highest bidder and then split without locating the title. I hate being laughed at by civil servants.

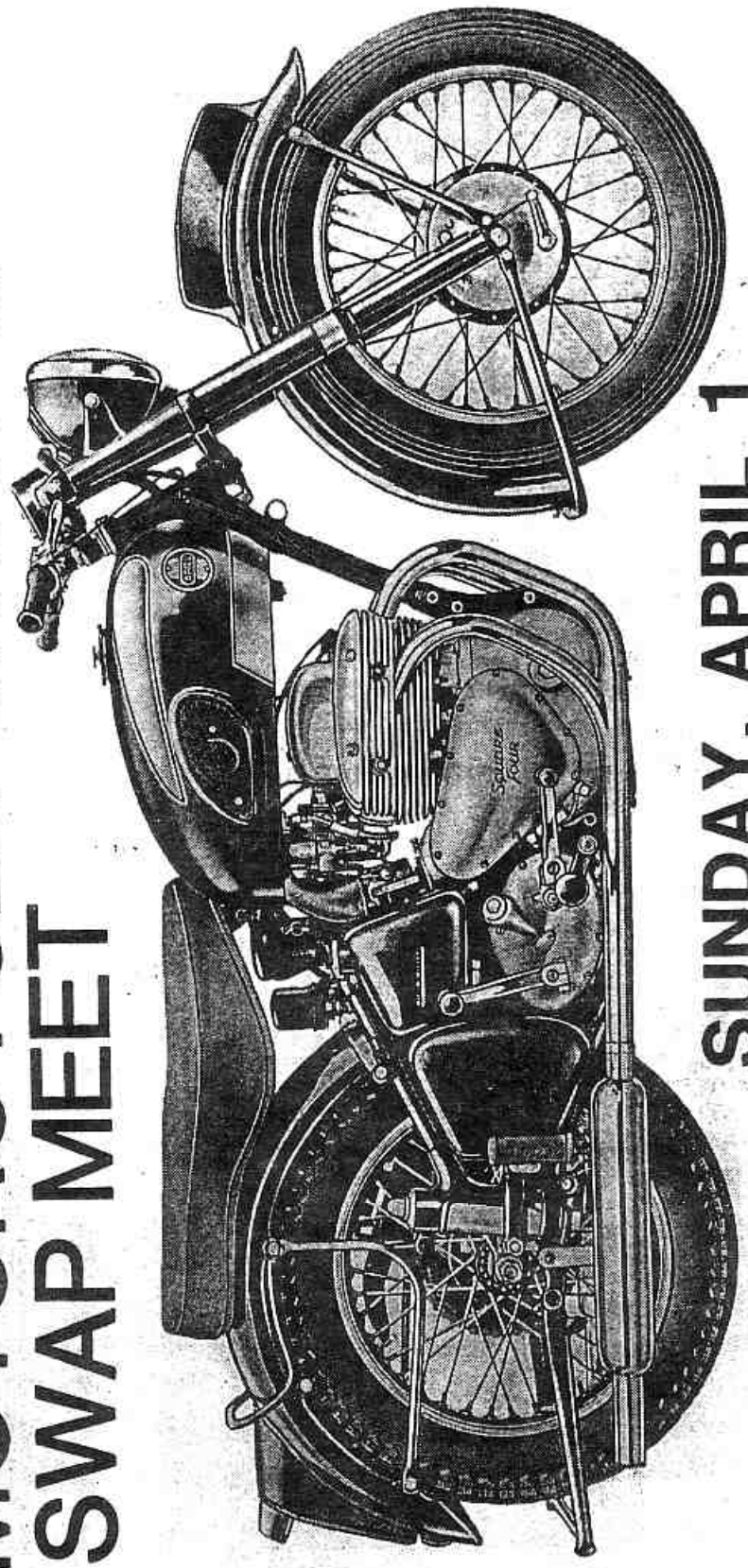
Prices seemed to vary widely and indicated a lack of knowledge on the part of some bidders. Some of the bikes were genuine originals, others were complete thorough restorations, and others were "fluff and buff." Some bidders couldn't tell which were which. A new Norton

MkIII still in the crate fetched \$8,000. A 1947 HRD twin got the bidding as high as \$14,000 when the auctioneer interrupted the procedure to announce that the owner had set the Minimum Reserve bid at \$20,000, so that bike didn't sell. In general, some good deals were had, with some bikes selling for \$200-300 below market value. Other machines went for several hundred dollars above market value. Lots of bikes did not sell.

A lot of motorcycle enthusiasts told me that they were against this type of event because they were convinced that it was inflationary, and that pretty soon only rich people will be able to afford this hobby/ investment. There seems to be a trend, which alarms them, of collectors owning large amounts of vintage machinery. This is bad they say because the bikes do not get ridden, parts do not wear out, new spares are not ordered, and manufacturers making vintage spares will go out of business.

I guess there is some truth to all this sentiment. But I see this auction as a symptom, not the cause of a problem. The trend for vintage bikes to increase in value and be thought of as investments may be inevitable. That some owners should consider the machines too precious to ride may be unavoidable. But I'm not too concerned. . . . By the way, I rode my 1970 Commando 800 miles down to the auction and back without any mechanical problems (except I had to stop twice in the middle of nowhere on Interstate 5 and help out two broken-down Harleys).

**THE THIRD ANNUAL
CLUBMAN'S ALL-BRITISH
MOTORCYCLE SHOW &
SWAP MEET**



SUNDAY, APRIL 1

CANTON COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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JULY 18 - 21, 1990

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Make check or money order payable to: INOA 1990 Rally Fund.

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ Z.P.: _____
INOA # _____ NO. IN PARTY (adults) _____ (children) _____
AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____ ALL FUNDS U.S.

A discount of \$5.00 per adult will be given for all pre-registrations postmarked before July 1, 1990.

February Minutes

(reported by John Covell)

Alan goldwarer convened the meeting at 8:30 at Gino's Pizza Parlor in Berkeley. About 17 members were present. Alan welcomed new and revived club members, verified the date of the first raffle bike wrench-off, and mentioned the imminent (2/11) Marin County ride. He reviewed the paraphernalia situation, discussed the new club emblem and the making of new items was discussed.

There will be a club booth at this year's Clubman's Meet in San Jose in April and several members volunteered to man the booth for one-hour stints. Alan offered to help find a trailer for anyone wanting to bring numerous bikes to the show.

Attention was called to the calendar of 1990 ride events, and volunteers to plan and carry them out were solicited. Leaders are needed for March 11 (East Bay ride) and July 15 (South Bay ride), and route suggestions are always welcome. Contact the Ride Coordinators. Directions to Andy Belcher's house in Menlo Park, for the wrench-off, were given.

Great American MC Show at the Cow Palace was mentioned. Daytona is approaching and it was noted that Eric Swortsfigure is not going this year; Margie Siegal will report on her return. Comment was made on the lackluster sales in this country by the Japanese motorcycle manufactures.

Suran Meissner's need for a bike smaller and lighter than a Commando was mentioned.

New Norton Book

Just when you thought the subject of Norton motorcycles had been thoroughly covered by several books on the subject, including *Norton Twins*, *Norton Singles*, *Norton Twin Restoration*, *Norton Story*, *Norton*, and *Norton Commando Super Profile*, along comes another publication to add to the list. This is a new title called *Norton Commando Motorcycle Monograph* by Roy Bacon, and is one title in a series of small booklets each concentrating on one particular manufacturer's specific model.

The good news is that this little booklet is filled with interesting information and photographs concerning the Commando. It really is a "must" for anyone contemplating the first purchase of a Commando, and makes a nice addition to anyone's Norton library. The information has been distilled from Roy Bacon's extensive writings on the subject and includes some never-before published photographs. It is clear and concise, printed on high quality stock, and covers all models of Commando. The price is only £3.95 (plus P&P), and is available from Niton Publishing, P.O. Box 3, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 2AS, United Kingdom.

My only criticism is that certain models are described but, inexplicably, not represented by any photographs. You'll not find any pics on an SS or an R type Commando. The cover photo, however, is beautifully done and shows a canary-yellow 1980 "S Type" Commando. Hmmm, something about that machine looks familiar. —Art Sirota

Update on Norton Group

The Financial Times Limited

NORTON PROFITABLE

With the boost of substantial profits from the U.S., Norton Group doubled its pre-tax outcome for the half-year ended October 28, 1989, from Pounds 257,000 to Pounds 517,000. The group is involved in engineering and distribution, makes the Norton motorcycle and rotary engines, and in the U.S. distributes pipe fittings and flanges.

Last June it reversed into Minty, the Oxford-based furniture maker, and gained a full stock market listing. But Minty's assets have been sold or are contracted to be sold (see below).

Mr. Phillipe Le Roux, chief executive, said those Minty businesses showed a marginal profit, whereas the engineering and distribution divisions were profitable. Pro-Fit in the U.S. made a "substantial contribution."

The Norton motorcycle and rotary engine business lost money. But the award of a U.S. Navy contract for rotary engines and the launch of the F1 motorcycle should lead to Norton Motors breaking even in the second half and trading profitably thereafter, he claimed. Deposits had been taken against over 90 orders for the new F1.

Referring to property sales, Mr. Le Roux said the Oxford transaction was subject to completion at the end of March.

Contracts for the sale for the sale of the Camden properties were not fulfilled, but the substantial deposits forfeited covered their carrying costs. They were currently on offer.

MINTY ASSETS SOLD

Norton Group has agreed a Pounds 3.15m management buy-out of Minty Design Furniture, the Oxford-based furniture maker it acquired as part of a reverse takeover of Minty. The management consortium is led by Michael Humphery, current managing director of MDF and a director of Norton Group. MDP lost Pounds 338,000 in the year to April 29.

The sale means that Norton has not sold, or has contracts to sell, all the assets it gained with the acquisition, except for the full stock market listing.

In a separate buy-out Norton agreed to sell Aerofoam, a former Minty subsidiary, and some north London property for Pounds 180,000. Norton has also agreed to sell seven development properties in Camden, north London, for Pounds 11.5m to Waterbay. And it received Pounds 475,000 in forfeited deposit from Priest Marians which pulled out of a bid for the Camden Properties.

Norton has also bought Piping Products, a distributor of welding fittings in the south east U.S., for dollars 450,000.

Classifieds

FOR SALE: parting several bikes. Here's some of the parts. Lots of stuff unlisted:
 Glass Roadster side covers and tank,
 new Deltron paint \$200
 Steel Roadster tank \$60
 1973 850 engine, less barrel & head,
 matching tranny \$350
 1974 850 engine, less barrel, RH10
 head, matching tranny \$350
 Various Commando transmissions, call
 or write for details and prices
 Good '74 Roadster left side cover, steel
 \$60

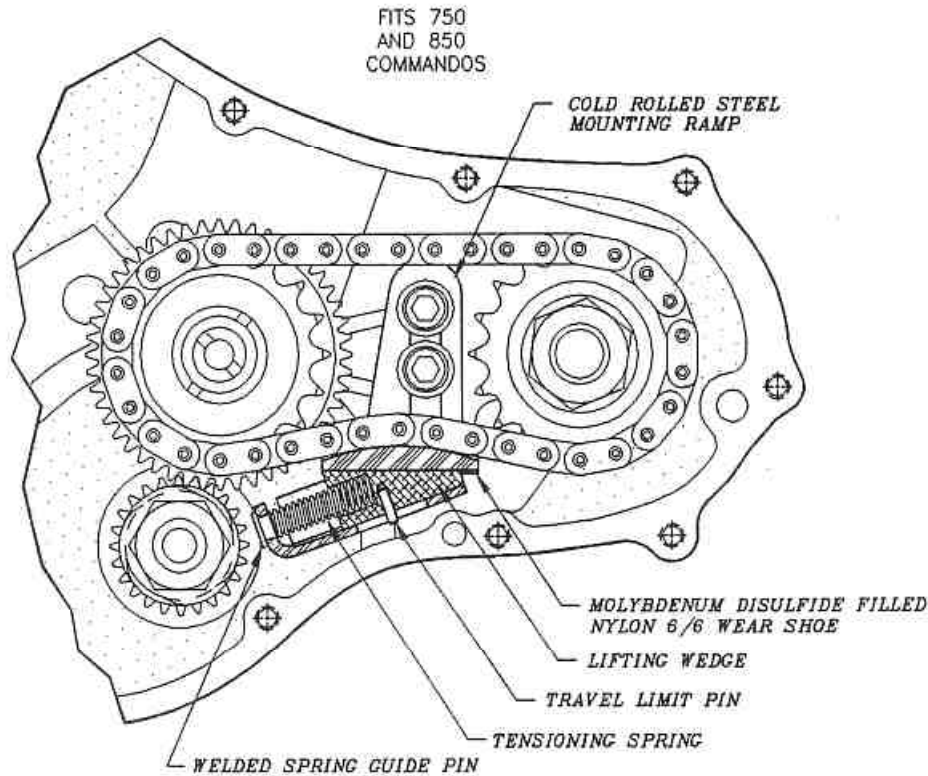
Stock shocks off MkIII with 2011
 original miles \$50/pair
 Stock shocks off MkIII with 4200
 original miles \$50/pair
 MkIII fork springs, 2011 miles \$20
 Chainguards from 71, 73, 75 Roadsters
 \$20 each
 Early style 750 headers with turn at
 head, 3 pairs \$40/pair
 After market 850 headers with no
 crossover, good shape \$40
 Two Dunlop rims off MkIII, mint
 condition \$80 each
 Amal Carbs off '71 Roadster \$15 each
 Two drum brake rear wheels, one nicer
 cond than the other \$40 & \$80
 '74 stainless front fender, good \$25
 Factory 850 headers with crossover,
 excellent \$75
 Countershaft sprocket, 22 tooth, unused
 \$15
 2 speedo drives, drum wheels \$30 each
 '71 & '74 oil tanks \$20 each
 '71 & '74 battery mounts \$15 each
 Robert G. Allan, PO Box 82633,
 Kenmore, WA 98028. (206) 486-6040

WANTED - Craven or Krauser saddle-
 bags with mounts for Commando or ??
 Call Alan at (408) 475-7505. /3

FOR SALE: early roadster fiberglass tail
 light assembly, used, very good condi-
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Contact Burton Kranzel
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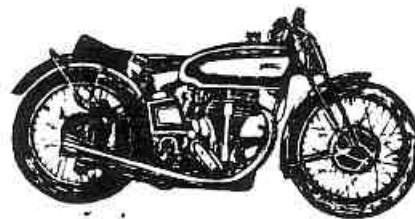
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