



Norton Notice



The Newsletter of the
Northern California Norton Owners Club

No. 186

October, 1993

The "Toot Sweet" contingent arrives...
John Bria and Al Mueller



Also inside: "Lost Norton Blues"



Norton Notice

is published by the Northern California 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.

The *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. (Good taste is somewhat optional, but hey- this is a group of bikers we're talking about here... that's why we have an editor.)

The deadline for items to be submitted for publication is the 20th of each month. The *NORTON NOTICE* welcomes contributions submitted electronically. Material in MS Word or Aldus Page-maker on a Macintosh 3.5" disc is ideal. You may also send it directly to the editor via modem at the telephone number listed for the Editor; set your telecom software for 8/n/1, use the XMODEM file transfer protocol, and just ring up the Editor who is home most evenings.

Membership in the Northern California Norton Owners Club is available for \$20.00 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.

All changes of address should go to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer- not the NOTICE editor.

The Northern California 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.

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IMPORTANT (Please take note of the following fine print):

The object of the Northern California 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.

Upcoming Events

Club Rides Schedule

September 12: the Old Timer's Ride and Club Picnic (yes, the BSA Club is invited again!)

October 17th: Hollister Ride

November 14th: Santa Cruz Ride

December- no Club ride- Christmas Party

Activities at a glance...

November 7, 1993- The Northern California All-British ride and party (AKA Don Danmeier's 4th annual 50th Birthday Party)- Just one rule applies: show up on a British motorcycle, or else be prepared for a long and boring ride back to your hacienda. CONTACT DON DAMNEIER AT (415) 898-0330 FOR DETAILS.

December- The Northern California Norton Owner's Club Christmas Party at the Farmhouse in Redwood City. The place is under new management- should be a great time to be had by one and all. Stay tuned for upcoming details.



Meeting Schedule

The Club meets on the second Thursday of each month. The meetings are SUPPOSED to start at 8:00 PM. If you get tired of bench racing, bring a newspaper to read.

September 9- *South Bay Ken Armann's Shop*
851 McGlincey La., Campbell, CA-
...tech sessions, bench racing, grub, etc.

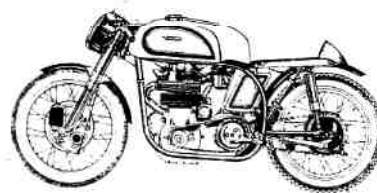
October 14- *Peninsula The Prince of Wales Pub*
off 25th Avenue, San Mateo
Great food, great grog, and tons of vibes.

November 11-
Harry's Hoffbrau
Near Castro Street, Mountain View

Graphics Contributions

Photography:
Alan Mueller

Press Production and Halftones:
John & Carrie Follett:
White Oak Press, San Carlos, CA



My Point of View by Joe Edwards, President

Well the Old Timers Ride and Picnic is now history for another year. All in all it looks like everyone had a great time. Of course, many people helped put it all together. A tip of the Norton cap to Maya, who baked those great brownies and cookies. Her sister also helped with the deviled eggs. The salad and the fresh fruit was out of sight as only Cindy can fix. Also a great big thanks to Cathy for the outstanding deviled eggs that she seved up.

And how can we forget the German Potato Salad prepared by the keeper of the coins, Grover. Last but not least, I would like to say a special thanks to my lady, Shelley, who stayed up most of the night with me helping get all the fixins together for the picnic. Also I would like to say thank you to the BSA club, BSA Triple Club, also the Monterey Bay European M.C. I would also like to say thank you to all of the people who donated door prizes for the event. Those folks were Bob Raber of Rabers Parts Mart, the folks at Monroe Motors, also Phil Radford of Fair Spares and Dennis Maggri of Maggri Motors. All of the gifts made the picnic a lot of fun. The grand prize from the North Texas Norton Owners Club, a weekend at Tahoe, was won by Harry Bunting.

All in all it was a great event... I hope you will take a moment to say thank you to those people who helped out in this event. For those of you who would like to know, Mr Fair Spares will be making a trip to Texas to visit the North Texas Norton Owners Club rally around the 1st of October. I bet we hear some tall tales when he gets back, ..have a great time

Phil.

Well by now, I think the word is out that the Northern California Norton owners Club will be hosting the National Rally in 1996, in Quincy, Ca. We hope to lock up the dates real soon. I will tell you now it will be one of the best rallies you will every attend.

As we pointed out in the last Notice and the last club meeting, we were to vote on officers for the year 1994. Just as in the past it was pretty cut and dry as to who the new slate would be. The following is the slate of officers (see bios later in the Notice)

President: Maya Lai
Vice President: Duncan Furgeson
Treasurer: Grover Buhr
Secretary : Al Mueller
Notice Editor: Al Mueller
Rides Marshall: Jim Carton
Paraphenalia: John Bria
Public Relations: John Covell
Photo Journalism: Gerald Mauricio

All of the above officers will be introduced at the Christmas Party at the FarmHouse, Saturday December 11, 1993.

Let's all get behind the new officers and lend your help and support. Well this is about it for this month. Thanks again for the great picnic and Old Timers Ride!!

That's my point of view !!

Minutes of September Meeting

The September 9th meeting of the Northern California Norton Owners Club was called to order at about 8:00 pm by President Joe Edwards.

The venue was Ken Armann's British Motorcycle Restoration in Campbell, California.

Ken and his wife, Cindy, went way out of their way to welcome the club. The sit down meal was excellent as was the dessert. Many thanks Ken for letting us meet at your shop.

The meeting itself was short and informal to allow more time to swap motorcycle stories. This also was one of the largest turnouts of the year for a monthly meeting with 42 members and guests (25 bikes not including the bike show Ken put on with his Atlas, John Player Special, Indian, Triumph, TT Special etc...)

Joe took time to remind us all that September 12th is the annual Old Timers Ride and Picnic. The ride is scheduled to leave Alice's Restaurant at approximately 10:00 am, finishing at Huckleberry Flats. Nominations of new officers will be held at the picnic.

Joe stated that the club will print extra copies of the Notice to give to the local British shops to post on bulletin boards. The hope is that this will attract new members and possibly new advertisers.

Don Danmeier has invited members of the club to attend the annual Birthday Bash in Novato on November 7th.

This is a don't miss event put on by Don — The rules are very simple — ride British or don't show up. The only other rule I know about is "it is Don's way or the highway". You might want to bring a camera. More details to follow.

Mark Weiss showed a collection of pictures of Rod Walker's Norton. If you are interested in having professional pictures of

your bikes taken, call Mark at (415) 960-6565.

Joe offered a reminder that the October 14th meeting of the N.C.N.O.C. will be held at the Prince of Wales in San Mateo.

Once again a special thanks to Ken Armann and Cindy Armann, and Cindy's mom and sister for all the work they did. The food was great. AND table cloths at a Norton meeting. **What is this world coming to?**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 pm.

Minutes of the September 12th meeting at the Old Timers Ride.

Nominations of the new officers for the Northern California Norton Owners Club were made. They are as follows:

President: Maya Lai

Vice-President: Duncan Ferguson

Treasurer: Grover Buhr

Notice Editor and Secretary: Alan Mueller

Paraphenalia: John Bria

Rides Marshall: Jim Carlton

Photo Journalism: Gerald Maurich

Public Relations: John Covell

Each prospective officer may submit a biography of 50 words or less to the Notice Editor for the next issue of the Notice. The voting will be held by mail-in ballot which will be supplied in the Norton Notice.

Respectfully submitted,

Duncan Ferguson



Whazz Happ'nin

...regional news of the NCNOC

East Bay Report

by *Duncan Ferguson*

Most of the month was taken up in preparation of the new venue for the monthly meeting at Ken Armann's shop and The Old Timers Ride.

I spent as much time as possible at Ken's shop- getting in his way-knocking things over- moving them to the wrong place and just sitting around drinking beer.

Stock parts here, hot rod parts there, stock bike here, California hot bikes there. As Tom Taylor of Home Improvement would say "Harh, harh, harh, ha." Watching a master at his trade do his thing is always fun.

At the Old Timers Ride, Jerry Joliff and I counted 22 Nortons - Atlas, John Players, Roadsters, Production Racers, Interstates and an Electra. Also 2 Vincents and a couple of Beemers. There were 16 BSAs and a few Triumphs for a total of well over 55 bikes.

An event of this size requires lots of work and special thanks to:

Joe Edwards and his wife for fixing the ribs and beans.

Ken and Cindy Armann for the salad and snacks.

Maia for the brownies and cookies.

Grover for the German Potatoe (sic) Salad.
Brad Green and Cathy who were the ride marshalls and crowd controllers as well as making some deviled eggs.

Jerry Joliff for tracking down wayward riders.

Lynn- Andy - Phil - John - Don - Art - Mike - Harry - etc, etc, for being there.

An event of this size takes lots of help. Thanks to all and I am sorry if I have forgotten anyone that helped.

South Bay Report

by *Maya Lai*

This month landed me in Quebec Canada. Nice and hot for a change. There were more British bikes to be seen this trip, but I wonder if it has anything to do with the weather being over 30 degrees.

I went into Moto Montreal, the local Norton, Triumph shop. They will be getting their new Triumphs in November this year. They will be getting the 900. They are thrilled to be able to get a hold of these bikes.

I asked if they would be dissolving the Norton and old Triumph bits and they said no. That was their real bread and butter.

While away, a new Triumph 900 was seen up at Alices. I do hope they are wedging their way into the scene.

The Old timer's ride was a success. My "Snort" (750) made it beautifully. A fellow that rode from New York, Bob was his name, stayed over my house to battle some odd it on his Norton and clean her at my suggestion. He agreed that it was better than having his bike out in the elements where one could lose it.

Making my way over to Raber's on the Ducati, I found myself staring at a New Nortocommander I fell in love immediately.

The people were a couple touring from England. Yes Yes, I know it's a Rotary and very Japanesy, but it IS still

Whazz Happ'nin (cont..)

a Norton. He seemed to have no problems with it. Small wonder with only three moving parts in it. Still in all, I was all AWE,-MMMM-,OOOOOH.

I would sell my Ducati so fast the tires would be ablaze going out of the driveway in order to get my hands on that Norton.

In other news of the month, I received a letter from Roy Bacon, informing me that Stanley Woods has died 4 months shy of his 90th birthday. He joined the Norton team in 1926 and won the Senior TT with the fastest lap of 67.54 mph.

Peninsula Report

by Jerry Joliff

I'll call this month's column, "is the grass really greener". Being in sales, in the automotive parts aftermarket, I'm "cherry picked" every day for the best price and I lose sales on a regular basis because I'm not the cheapest. Some of my accounts would rather tie up a customer's car for an extra day to save 10%-15%. So what if the part is of lesser quality - does anyone consider the return policy? How about a warranty? Here's my point. When the economy (dollars) get tight, people and Norton owners are more concerned with how they spend their consumer dollars on parts and service. They may feel they can get parts and service cheaper outside of the Bay Area. I say this! We need to patronize and support those vendors who advertise in the Notice. These advertisers have spent a lot of time and money learning how to fix our beasts and have the parts on hand to do so. We need to support them especially in tough times

and keep the dollars growing so as the weather and the economy improves again, we all will enjoy riding, "not missing" club functions.

NOC Member Profile

NAME: Harry Bunting

AGE: 40+

CITY RESIDENT: Sunnyvale

MARITAL: Married, 1 son

OCCUPATION: Engineer (Hewlett-Packard)

NOC MEMBER SINCE: 1980

HOW FIRST BECAME INVOLVED WITH NOC: Through Harvey Loucks [M.I.A.]

CLUB OFFICES HELD (YEARS): Secty-Treasurer 1989-91; Tool Coordinator 1985-91.

NORTON(S) OWNED, DESCRIBED: '73 Commando Roadster 850 (w/chrome tank)

OTHER MAKES OF MOTORCYCLE: None

WHAT FIRST INTERESTED YOU IN THE NORTON? Harvey Loucks; the sound, the handling.

OTHER HOBBIES/INTERESTS OF NOTE? Playing guitar; herpetology.

FAVORITE MOTORCYCLING ROAD/RIDE: Tioga Pass Road

IF YOU COULD REDESIGN THE NORTON, WHAT ONE THING WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO CHANGE? HOW AND WHY? Make the [Amal] carburetors so they'll idle.

FAVORITE/MOST EMBARRASSING EPISODE ON A NORTON? Pulling into Virginia City in front of 150 Nortons during the 1991 INOA Rally — mine broke! Had to be towed back to the campsite by a Mercedes, imagine the embarrassment.

Side Trips

by *Andy McKerral, Editor*

It only goes to prove that time-worn adage: "Use it or you lose it." Coming back over the mountains behind Marick Payton after the fabulous Old Timer's Ride, my skills painfully showed the signs of doing way too much work and not nearly enough riding. It wasn't so long ago ... hell, let's not kid ourselves- it WAS that long ago- I was taking those twisties at 60-65 mph, and staying right up with Marick, occasionally overtaking him (but not too often). This time, I felt like an anchor. I found myself doing 55 mph coming through most turns and Marick was 1/4 mile ahead of me consistently all the way up. I was able to find the hook going into the slot well enough, but my at-speed leaning skills have taken a serious nose dive. Maybe it's all for the better that I take it easy from now on anyway- I've got customers that need me to fulfill contractual obligations now, and a dead reprographics engineer would do them no good.

As for the Old Timer's Ride, it was a pity that a lot of folks elected to either stay home, or else avoid the extended end of the ride itself. Lynne Miller is able to do something that I wish I could do: throttle one's involvement back to the extent where although scheduling doesn't permit one a high profile, one nonetheless does the few things one can better than anyone else. Lynne's two things are the Mount Tam Easter Morning Ride, and this Old Timer's Ride. For those of you who haven't experienced Tunitas Creek Road in the late morning light, you're missing one hell of a gorgeous ride. Taken at the right speed, you get to see towering

redwoods, spanish moss, fern-covered cliff overhangs, and some of the dandiest twisties anywhere. It was pure sensory overload...

When we arrived at the junction of Stage Road and Hwy 84 near San Gregorio, a chap on a BSA Goldstar found himself with a seriously deflated front tire. Marick managed to commandeer an antique but serviceable tire pump from the general store on the corner, but by the time we went outside to lend assistance, he'd taken off for Pescadero down the coast. At least we tried.

When we got to Huckleberry Flat, most of the people were there ahead of us. Someone had actually taken the trouble to do a state-of-the Art restoration on a Norton Electra. What a gorgeous machine! Also, there was a guy who was visiting the area- from FLORIDA- on an 850 Interstate. Although the turnout was somewhat less than last year's attendance, we were nonetheless a spirited group.

And oh, the FOOD! There were BBQ ribs damn near as thick as your wrist, a fantastic salad and veggies by Ken Armann's wife, and some of the best nut brownies I've ever put in my mouth made by Maya Lai.

There were door prizes (I'm still not sure where the door was...)- and a lot of folks got treated with complementary prizes from Raber's, Magri Motors, Phil Radford, and other BritBike businesses in the Bay Area. Thanks for the support of these fine people. Of course, Harry Bunting won the grand door prize of a trip to Lake Tahoe, but that's a story that he should tell.

I'll leave the other parts of this issue to reveal the new nominees for Club Officers- but I think that everyone will be pleased with the choices.

In Search of the Perfect Norton

By Robert Newman

Subject: ROTAX TAPPET SCREWS

Want to achieve a major improvement in your Norton valve train? Switch to ROTAX valve adjusting screws.

Ideally, this modification should be done during a cylinder head overhaul so as to get maximum improvements in the least time. For this upgrade, head removal is mandatory.

Let's consider the stock setup. regular tappet screws amount to a little dome-faced hammer beating the hell out of the end of the valve stem. As this beating takes the shape of an arcing motion, the valve stem is constantly pulled into the guide resulting in guide bore ovality. Other problems include dented contact surfaces with confusion about actual lash settings. Broken hardface occurs

frequently due to misaligned rockers.

A ROTAX tappet screw has a swivel cap for a contact end and makes flush contact with most of the end of the valve stem.

In fact, the ROTAX part is so kind to the end of the valve stem that no hard face is needed on the stem end. That's nice, 'coz you have to shorten the valve stems for clearance. The swivel cap slides smoothly over the end of the valve stem and follows the arcing movement of the rocker.

There's more to this than I can cover here, so if you're interested, check with Bill Manking or Ken Augustine.

Brian Slark pioneered this conversion and reports good results on all bikes with the ROTAX setup.

Prospective Officer Profiles

Maya Lai for Club President

I've been a club member over 20 years and very loyal to the Norton.

I will listen to criticism and kindness but will accept kindness before criticism.

I am open to all new ideas and will preserve the tradition that have made us the great club we are.

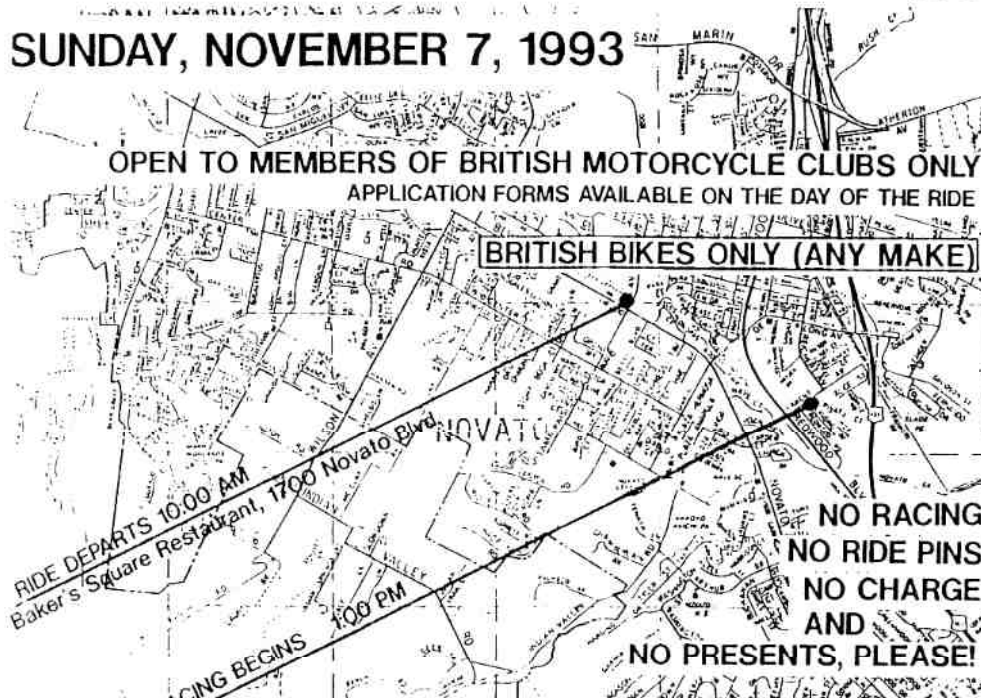
Alan Mueller for Secretary and Norton Notice Editor

I am new to this club joining only 8 months ago after buying my first

Norton from Ken Armann. I am a dentist in San Carlos. I have been in practice for almost 25 years. I enjoy playing music and I am a member of the same Dixieland band that John Bria plays with.. I feel I can take over the splendid job Andy has done because I do understand computers and I feel I have the creativity required to keep up the fine quality of the Notice.. I am also running for the office of Secretary only because I will be at most of the meetings and would have to type up the minutes anyway,... so why not ??

**NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ALL-BRITISH RIDE &
FOURTH ANNUAL DON DANMEIER 50th BIRTHDAY PARTY**

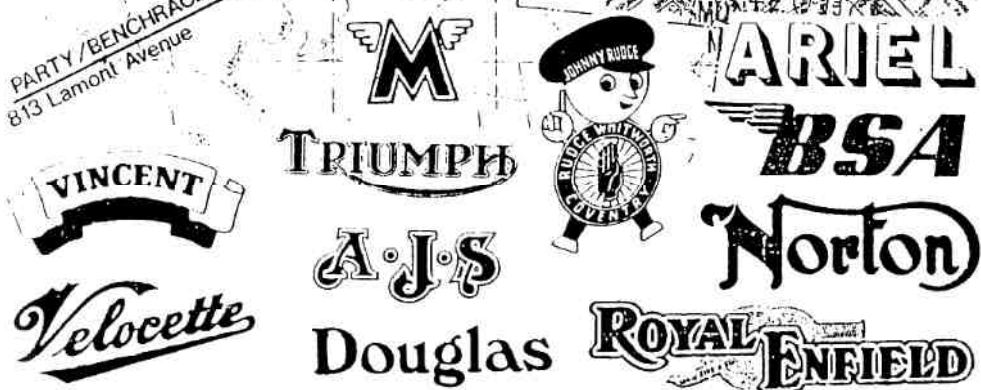
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1993



OPEN TO MEMBERS OF BRITISH MOTORCYCLE CLUBS ONLY
APPLICATION FORMS AVAILABLE ON THE DAY OF THE RIDE

BRITISH BIKES ONLY (ANY MAKE)

NO RACING
NO RIDE PINS
NO CHARGE
AND
NO PRESENTS, PLEASE!



SPOUSES/GIRLFRIENDS/BOYFRIENDS/SIGNIFICANT OTHERS WELCOME IF ACCOMPANYING A MEMBER

FOR THOSE TRUCKING IN BIKES: plenty of on-street parking at the house

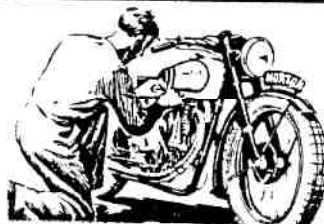
FOR OUR OUT OF TOWN FRIENDS: Travelodge 415-892-7500 Quality Inn 415-883-4400

Questions/info: Don Danmeier 415-897-6145 days, 415-898-0330 eves to 9

Alan's Wrench

Tech Tips and Gossip by
Alan Goldwater

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This is the second in a series of articles on the thermal behavior of air-cooled motorcycles. Last month I discussed the limiting factor of oil flash point. I found that popular multigrade oils varied widely in their maximum temperature, including the so-called synthetic oils. I have now found one reason for this and I am indebted to Lou Caputo for passing on the following data, published by Red-Line Oils of Martinez.

There are four basic kinds of feed stock used in lubricating oils today. Petroleum-based oils are most common and typically boil (flash) at around 400-420 degrees F. Oils made from chemicals called poly-olefins are basically synthetic petroleum and boil at slightly higher point due to their purity, say 440-450. Mobil1 and Castrol Syntec synthetics are this type.

Another basic variety, diester oils, are made from organic fatty acids and alcohol, and boil at around 470 F. Amsoil and perhaps Havoline Formula 3 are representative of this type.

Both the diesters and poly-olefins cost around 4 times as much as the petroleum-based oils, but are supposed to last around 4 times as long while offering superior lubrication. Diester-based oils are thought to have some degrading effect on rubber parts such as seals and oil filter

components, but I have heard no first-hand reports of problems.

A final type of oil base is pentyl polyol ester. This is a more complex version of the diester base and boils at over 520 F! To my knowledge only Red Line uses this expensive feed stock. In particular, their racing oil is pure polyol ester, which they claim has the extraordinary film strength of 500,000 psi, great for those soft Norton camshafts.

I have not priced or tested the Red Line products but based on their published data, they are certainly superior to anything else on the market. I have finished testing Mobil1 and Golden Spectro synthetics and will try the Red Line next. I noticed that the 20w-50 rated Spectro product was far more viscous than the Mobil1 (15w-50). The effects of this were particularly striking in that the Mobil1 would wet-sump the entire contents of the oil tank overnight, while the Spectro was less than a quart down after two weeks of sitting! Now imagine the amount of each that would be left clinging to the camshaft on startup and you can see why this is important. I sent samples of these two brands for "oilscan" analysis of oxidation and engine wear, and will report the results next month.

Following my initial testing of the

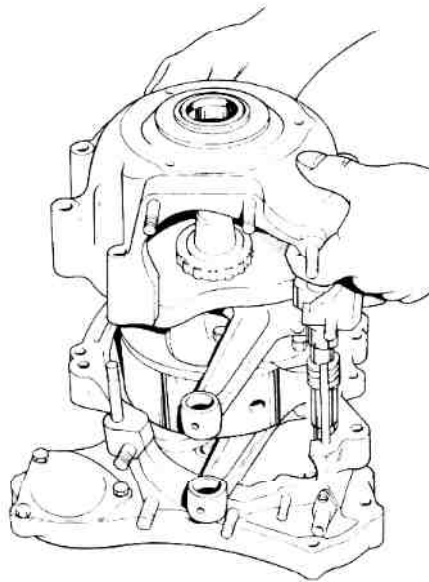
Commando's engine and oil temperature I decided to install an oil cooler. In the past I had some less than satisfactory experiences with the Lockhart coolers which had become the defacto standard. The placement of the cooler and routing of the hoses is a problem on the Commando, as the usual location just below the steering head means long hoses and dents in the front fender. A lower mounting position means blocking airflow to the cylinder or head itself, definitely not acceptable.

From my experience as an electronics engineer I knew a lot about heat sinks and thermal transfer, so I came up with a design which avoids all the problems of the plumbed-in "wet" cooler. An alloy heat sink assembly is mounted in the oil tank side cover so that it contacts the oil tank surface. After testing a few designs, I settled on one with 10 fins 1 inch deep, totalling 140 square inches in radiating area. This is adequate to dissipate around 100 watts of heat in still air and over 500 watts with 60 mph airflow. The limiting factor in this design is the thermal conductivity of the steel oil tank and the oil itself.

Extensive testing of this design showed it to consistently reduce oil temperature in the tank by 15 degrees, around the same as a conventional cooler. Next, I inserted a thermocouple through a small hole in the exhaust valve cover to measure the temperature of the oil flowing down the pushrod tunnel inside the head. I found that at speed the oil temperature inside the head is about 35 degrees cooler than the head itself, measured at the side

head bolts. This is important because it shows that there is enough oil flow to actually cool the head, provided that the oil enters the head at a low enough temperature. On repeating the original tests, I found that the oil cooler also reduced the cylinder head temperature by about 12 degrees. At 65 mph, oil temp in the pushrod tunnel was 241 F, dropping to 228 with the cooler installed. Cylinder head temp dropped from 275 to 263.

Earlier I reported that the highest engine and oil temperatures occur at relatively slow air speeds (ie. around town or with a tailwind). My next article will investigate the effect of an oil cooler in reducing this risk. Meanwhile, ride fast and keep that oil clean!



Editor's Note: This article appeared in the September edition of the Northwest Norton Owner's Club newsletter, The Northwest Atlas. It is reprinted herein with the permission of the NWNOC Club President, Steve Neal. The article was submitted anonymously. I believe that the ladies in our Club will benefit from these insights.

Lost Norton Blues

How did I ever get myself into this mess anyway? I guess it started with this boyfriend, Luigi. I lived with Luigi, a nice enough man, but not altogether principled. My taste in boyfriends is not too famous, but it does give my girlfriends some entertainment. But that's another story...

Anyhow, winter 91-92, I kept getting these credit card apps in the mail. These Yuppie-traps proffered outrageous limits, and offered outrageous rates. The credit card that trapped the Yuppie in me came with a limit that was 20 percent of my yearly income and coincidentally, 20 percent interest as well. But the fact that there was not a yearly fee is what snagged me. "Gee, if I don't use it..."

My boyfriend has this friend Guido. Guido is the kind of guy that is in financial straits all the time. I'm sure you know one yourself. So Guido already owes me \$500 from a Volkswagen engine I had sold him some months before. He was putting together this Volkswagen bug to sell. Guido told me that if I would front him the engine, he would pay me as soon as he completed and sold the car in a month or two (HA HA).

Anyway, Luigi told Guido that I got this new credit card. Guido comes to me and made me feel like the powerful Matriarch of a God-Father type. He looked

at me with those watery puppy dog eyes, and bemoaned horror stories of creditors like wolves after him and his business... Of course it didn't work, you know I'm not a sucker (anymore)...

I'm okay until he mentioned the word "Norton".

...Okay, so I'm a sucker for a few specific things. Guido knew of my penchant for the bike that sat dusty in his back bedroom. Yes, he saw me pause and drool over this piece of British workmanship that sat lonely and unattended to. In fact, I now remember Luigi and I once were over visiting Guido, and Luigi caught me peering at this rusty dustball. Luigi warned me that day. He said, "Sugarpop baby, you ever get a Norton and that's the end of it, I'm gone."

Well, disregarding the beau's earlier prediction, Guido and I made the deal; solidified by trading the title for 1500 bucks and the promises of payback in a few weeks.

At my own home with time to actually examine the machine, I found the motorcycle confused me. I am very familiar with my 1974 good-n-solid German two cylinder putt-putt. This British machine with its extra mystery parts was so overwhelming as to be irritating. Besides, I had my rubber cow (the BMW) to contend with, and he demands a lot of spring attention.

The Norton slept in the garage... it's slumber included wet dreams. I invested in kitty litter, and clay hillocks flourished and grew beneath the chassis.

Mid-summer, hot and reliably rideable. A sweet spot in the Great Northwest. Amrita (a girlfriend of mutual interest) and I rode into a Tenino swap meet. Lots to look at, nothing to buy. We ran into Doug and some friends though.

We made plans and rode back with them. I like to think of Doug as a master of the southside twisties.

We paused to eat onion rings with tartar sauce. Thirsty, we stopped at a tavern with a pile of Nortons in the parking lot. Inside, talking with the Norton boys, I can't help but to mention, "I have an 850 Commando" (my method of flirtation). About five of the other guys answered in unison, "Want to sell it?" (obviously THEIR method of flirtation)

A hoot of a ride back. Nice, skilled and considerate riders. Beautiful machines...

Okay, okay, this inspired me. It had been six months...maybe I could assume that that Guido isn't going to pay up. I decided to pull the machine off it's throne of kitty litter and see what I got.

Hmm, there's a lacquer paint job that never got buffed out. Corrosion here and there, looks like a hellacious detail job a-coming my way. Had to get the boyfriend to kick-start the bike. Oh my God, the smoke, the noise, the glare, I can't comprehend it all; maybe I should just sell it. But you know... on the other hand, it doesn't sound bad at all, not at all.

Looking back on that moment, I was doing just fine up till then. I didn't know what would happen when I pushed it to the top of the driveway: that I would be doomed, captured, spellbound. I only rode that thing up the street and back. A trail of oil spilled merrily behind me. I was captivated. Shaking and giddy, I wanted more. I couldn't keep my hands off, wheeling it back and forth as if it were a bicycle, so light and fun.

Over the next few weeks, I buried myself in the machine and the lore around it. It was a 1974 engine and tranny with matching serial numbers. One wheel

English, one Italian, a general mish-mash of parts, but the good stuff was there.

The aluminum oxide reluctantly abdicated. The black paint developed that lovely new Lacquer glow. I slowly deciphered the origins of the leaks. At night I dreamed of concourse, and vintage racing at S.I.R.

I joined the Norton club which turned out to be the same group from that day in Tenino. From the NWNOC, I received massive advice and help.

I was offered a pile of money for the bike at the Vashon (fashion) event that fall, but it was too late by then- I was full into it. Perched riding position, the beast below, engine rumble, blur of road, hot asphalt smell, rough batter of the wind, cool draught of light into shadow... I wax poetic on my Norton in the late summer.

Meanwhile, Luigi and my days of wine and roses seemed to be coming to a close. We fought on the front lawn in front of the Norton. It gleamed in the driveway while my neglected rubber cow looked balefully from the garage. My man, my cow- perhaps perhaps it was a lack of attention to the ego. So frail. I have frequently found men to be fickle, confusing creatures that don't really know how to say what they need. Luigi was no exception. I never knew what exactly he was angry about, just that he was being pretty rude and certainly not very constructive in his bellowing. A girl can stand only so much, you know, and it was getting pretty ugly. So I ousted him. This left me in financial straits, stuck with twice as much rent and bills (besides there being no one around who could open jars).

Guido magically appears on the scene during this period of stress, offering

me money for my bike via the phone. By now- with interest and all- Guido owes me a healthy sum of money, \$2300 buckos, baby. With Luigi's hearty encouragement, I tell Guido that I will give him back the Norton only for all the money that he owes me. Uh-oh, this instantly transforms Guido into Bluto! His chest gets puffy (I can even tell over the phone) and he's a-rantin and a-pountin, saying that everything was "separate deals" and I had no right to ask for all the money at once.

So I do my girly best to calm him. Luigi was strangely supportive of me throughout this ordeal. He came over and gave me advice and offered to do whatever he could for me. He reassured me that Guido was thoroughly trustworthy and at the same time berated me, telling me that I had improperly angered Guido by presenting the debt so bluntly over the phone. He told me to call Guido and be nice to him, to make up for my unbecoming social behavior. So I call him and Guido arrives, strutting and angry. With Luigi's encouragement over my shoulder and Guido's oaths in my ears, I give Guido the bike and title. He gave me some money, the deal being that he would drop off the rest of what he owed me in the morning.

I watched him ride off on that Norton of mine. That bike I loved. His bulk splayed over the motorcycle, ungainly and uncoordinated in dirty tennis shoes. He didn't fit on it, he didn't even know how to tickle the carbs. Oh, God- he didn't love that motorcycle the way I do.

The next day never saw Guido. I called him to see what's up and he says, "Oh, didn't you talk to Luigi? He and I

made a deal..."

That was many moons ago. I'll never see any more money, but it ain't the money. I lost that sweet sounding, warm engine that ran below me.

I fell into a deep depression, drinking my nights away in seedy bars and talking to men that drive Pacers and Hyundais. My recovery has been slow and painful. I have shed many a tear upon looking at that long trail of oil (once merrily) up the street and back again to my driveway.

But what happened to Luigi, you ask? Ahh well, slime attracts slime, and now he works for Guido. I hope that they get married.

To close, let me give you the moral of the story, boys- don't ever fuck with a girl and her motorcycles, because she might just hate you forever.

PARTY TIME...with Maya !!

Christmas tree trimming party.

This is a non-offical Norton get together.
Saturday, December 4th,
 1370 Mckendrie St. San Jose,
 Please bring an ornament made from a bike part.

Nothing major please. The tree will not withstand a barrel fora tree topper.

It's just a fun party, Food drinks and the beginning of the holiday cheer.

I'm giving plenty of notice in advance so to plan ahead.

I will post it again nearer to the end of the year.

(408) 241-4615. Posted by Maya

Fifth Gear

by Tarmo Jagas

Delay after interminable delay. Surely now, I have a greater degree of compassion for the heroic efforts of the Editor to publish within a deadline. (*Ed.'s Note: I appreciate the sentiment- but after three years of this convoluted nonsense, I'm starting to even LOOK like Hunter Thompson... and that's a very scary thing!*)

I had wanted to leave for the Dardanelles directly after work from Grass Valley. However, I had to settle for a 10:30 departure from my home travelling through Truckee which registered the Nation's lowest temperature of 25 degrees, arriving in Tahoe at 2:30 AM. Three hours of sub-freezing temps (what's the wind chill factor at 55 versus 75?). Thank you Kevin for that leather and down coat and Mr. Chellette for the warm place and the knowledge of "CHI"! A toasty night's sleep for 5 hours and off to Grover Hot Springs for body repair. What a great place... two olympic-sized pools: one at 104 degrees non sulphur mineral water, and the other 73 degree clear water. There was only a handfull of folks at 9:00 AM (when they open), but by 10:30 the place is jammed.

Monitor Pass! What a treat for the eyes. What a revitalizing effect on the spirit. High in the Sierras. A sweet ride down to 395. No sooner had I made my turn then I saw an approaching formation of motorcycles. There is no mistaking that particular crisp, aggressive angulation of bodies riding Nortons. Back over the pass for a high time in Markleeville. Back over the pass again. Is this a race? NOT!- well, maybe just a little bit. Where did

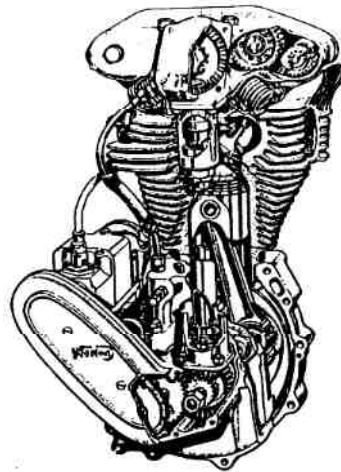
Brad go? Guess he missed the finish line. Where's Kevin and Lou? The first can also be the last. Da Buddahood of Riding.

The Dardanelles- thanks, Ken for the inspiration. Thanks, Cindy for the taste treats that do more than confirm culinary expertise. Sunday morning brought ominous clouds and a few drops. I decide to trailer my bike with David to Colfax. Thank you Dave, and also thanks to Caren for dinner and more kindness. Tales of horrible traffic jams and torrential downpours around Tahoe and the Eastern Slope reaffirm my choice to trailer. Still 1-1/2 ride home. WOW! those are the darkest clouds I've seen in years. The rain hit halfway from home- no problem. The back brake doesn't work, good tires trash. Front brake doesn't work, either! Got to get holes drilled.

I thank God that lightening doesn't strike.

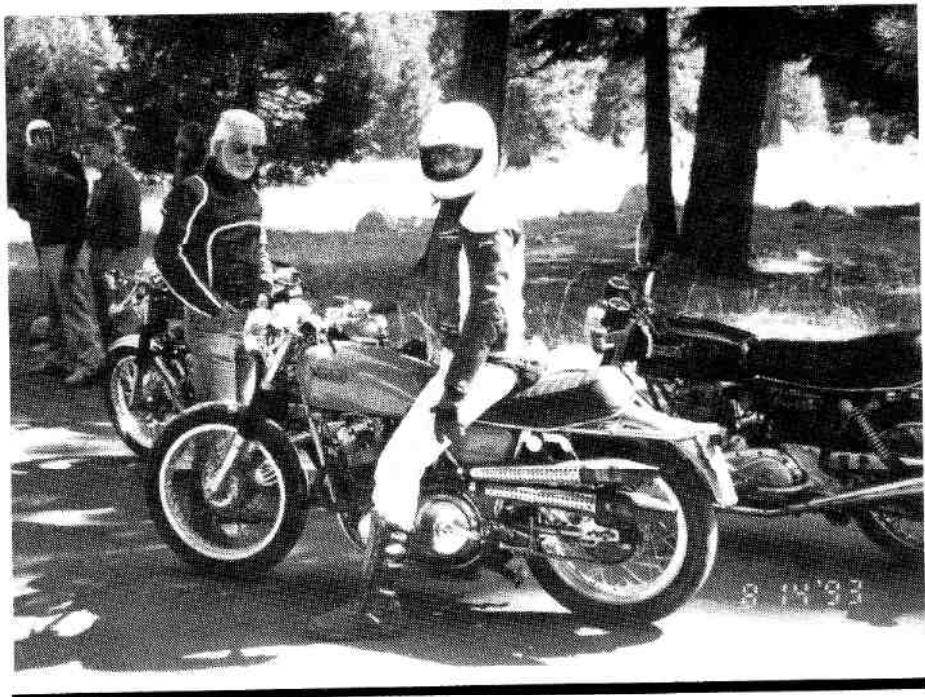
I eventually made it home to dry out.

On a wing and a prayer... Tarmo





Some late photos from the Dardanelles Rally





Nobody seems to believe that Mr. Christianson showed up...



A favorite shot from the Club Archives of "Dan Donmeier"

(l.-r.) McKerral, Buhr, Bria and Newman being their jocular, social old selves at the Prince of Wales Pub (doubtless they've just completed a plan to let the air out of Marick Payton's bike before he leaves.....)



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