



Norton Notice

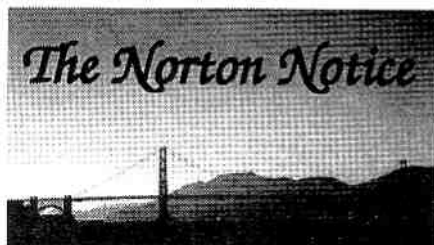


The Newsletter of the
Northern California Norton Owners Club

No. 216

June, 1996





is published by the Northern California Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain members about all aspects of Norton motorcycles, including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque. The *Norton Notice* is a reflection of its readers, who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, or photograph (original or otherwise) in good taste for other Norton enthusiasts to enjoy.

The deadline for submitting items for publication is the 20th of each month. The *Norton Notice* welcomes contributions submitted electronically, preferably in MS Word, MS Works, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format. The *Notice* is produced using Aldus PageMaker 5.0.

Membership in the Northern California Norton Owners Club is available for \$20 per year. Membership dues are payable to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer. Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, in the month designated by the last number of the individual's membership number as listed on the mailing label of the *Norton Notice* and on the membership card.

Send change-of-address information to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer, not the *Norton Notice* Editor.

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

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Words to live by. . . *The objective 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 often submit technical tips pertaining to Norton motorcycles for publication in the Norton Notice. Technical tips 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 its members for any problems resulting from use of these technical tips. The Club assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. Norton Notice articles 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. Club activities and membership are subject to standards established in the Club by-laws. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you know.*

Upcoming Events

Rides are on Sundays, unless otherwise noted. All rides kickstart at **9 a.m. sharp**. Be gassed-up, fed, and ready to roll! Call Jim Carton for details about any ride.

June

- 16 **Santa Cruz/South Coast ride***
Trophy party* to follow, Alan Goldwater's house, Santa Cruz

July

- 18-21 (Thursday - Sunday)
INDA Rally, * Quincy, CA
- 20-21 (Saturday - Sunday)
BMT Promotions show and swap meet, Carson City, NV
- 28 **Norton/BSA Club British Singles/ Pre-Commando Twins Ride**
Velocette Owners Club also invited. Let's get older bikes on the road; no Commandos! Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Lighthouse café on Bridgeway in Sausalito. Call Stevan Thomas at (415) 923-1662 for more info.

August

- 8 - 11 (Thursday - Sunday)
Dardanelle ride (unofficial)

September

- 15 **Old Timers' ride***
It's tradition to ride your favorite "old timer" to this one, which is also the Club's annual picnic.

October

- 13 **Mt. Hamilton ride***

November

- 17 **After the Danmeier ride***

December

- TBD **Holiday party and Annual General Meeting, location TBD**

* Points awarded for participation:

Nortons	6
Other British makes	4
Non-British makes	2
Other	1

Sign up with the Ride Marshall to get your points! *If we can't read your scrawl, you only get 1 point.*

MEA CULPA!

Whip me, beat me, flog me with a spark plug wire - I promise this "late Norton Notice" stuff won't go on forever! Last month, we encountered serious technical difficulties just as we were putting the finishing touches on the issue. A corrupt file kept crashing the computer, and after hours of frustration trying to fix the problem, we ended up having to re-load the software to access the file the Notice was in! This month, the same file popped up again, so we re-built the entire Notice from scratch. Unfortunately, this took considerable time and we had to work around the designer's business travel schedule. The problem should be solved, however, and I look forward to getting the Notice out to you on time! In the meantime, I hope the quality of the issues makes up somewhat for the lateness.

Maya's Minutes

by Maya Lai, President

Last month's meeting was well-attended, and lots of bikes showed up. It was, after all, a nice night. The same old drudge of wanting to change the meeting night came up. There is a survey in this *Notice*. Fill it out and send it in to the Editor, so we can determine whether or not we should take action on this.

Rally stuff: the Friday night dinner will be put together by the Rainbow Girls. Alan, who arranged this, feels they may need a little help from us. Everything is coming along, but we really need you to pre-register right away.

Ron Bastiaans bought the raffle book and Bruce McGregor won the 50/50 draw.

There was concern about smoking in closed areas during our meeting. I tend to agree that it can get stuffy and very smelly when you guys light up in a poorly-ventilated room. Please be courteous to the others who don't smoke. Thank you.

THOUGHTS for Public Consumption

by Greg Braithwaite

What do you know? It's the beginning of—(insert month here). That's right, it's Norton Club meeting time.

I don't know about the rest of you, but going to a Norton Club meeting is quite a big deal to me. There's plenty of advance planning involved: Do I have any money for food/beer/gas? Did I fix the headlight on my Atlas? Is that thing—(insert thing here) prepared for Friday?

And then, of course, there is the journey to the meeting site. Am I riding my bike? If I am driving, with who? What time are we meeting?

No matter what one answers to those questions, I am sure one point can be agreed upon: *attending a Norton Club meeting is a ritual.* And no matter who you ask (from Plato to Tao) they will tell you "ritual is good."

Therefore (by that line of reasoning), *meetings are good.* So go to one, it's alright.



Upon the Avons

by Stevan Thomas

I had my first motorbike, a 1953 BMW R51/3, when I was 14 years old. Well, it wasn't really mine, but I got to take care of it, so I moved it to the back porch of our flat (to my mother's chagrin) and proceeded to pull the heads off to see what kind of shape everything was in. I was a motorbike-mad youth back when Honda was winning all five classes in Grand Prix racing—and the ultimate motorcycle, as far as I was concerned, was the Manx Norton (the Goldstar BSA and the G-50 Matchless were close behind).

Lately, I've been contemplating what it means to be a motorcyclist. For me, it's a passion (I've never really liked the term "hobby"). I tinker, because I have English bikes, but it's really about going for a ride and enjoying the scenery, the fresh air and the handling of these fun old beasts! If I could, I would ride every day of the week. As it is, I commute to work on the bike, and if it wouldn't make me a single man again, I would go for a long ride every weekend, too!

But even an enthusiast like me has limits. For example, I don't ride in the rain, and I don't like to ride at night. I ride in what gentlemen call "a sporting manner," and find that night riding and rainy weather introduce a whole new set of hazards that I would rather not deal with. Motorcycling is plenty dangerous during daylight when the roads are dry.

A recent drive to Los Angeles reminded me of night's danger. Interstate 5 was littered with truck tire treads—the kind of thing you may not see at night in time to avoid, if you happen to be looking in your mirror at the wrong time. It's the kind of thing that can ruin your night, your bike and

your leathers.

Not only that, but people (including me) don't see as well at night as they do during the day, there are more drunks on the road, and, most inconveniently, if you break down, no one will see you shivering by the side of the road and you certainly won't have enough light to fix anything!

Given all this, I guess you can understand why I find the idea of pulling Snort out of the garage and driving 70 to 100 miles on the freeway, after dark, to go to a Club meeting pretty unappealing and, in some ways, not too smart. I really like the idea of social get-togethers with the Club, but I would like to see a different format than in a bar, on a week night. I do like the Prince of Wales, and think the food is good there, and I like the Lord Derby Arms, in Calistoga, which is a great place for a meeting (it's just too far away for a weeknight meeting).

So, here are some thoughts to consider: have one meeting a quarter in a Pub like the Prince, and the other meetings during the day on a ride or on a weekend, or have the winter meetings indoors and the riding-season meetings on the rides. Would this make you more likely to come to a meeting? Or a ride?

And for some more to think about, there is a poll in this issue. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions, put it in an envelope and mail it to me. Fill it out right away, and don't delay—your opinion counts today! Results will appear in the August *Notice*.

Meanwhile, go wear some tread off the sides of your tires.

Mailbag

From across the Pond

Please convey my condolences to John Bria's family and friends. We in the NOC met John, and also Alan Mueller, and their spouses, in England a couple of years ago, and this was my introduction to the NCNOC.

I wonder if you would permit us to reproduce some of your material in the NOC *Roadholder* magazine? I am thinking particularly of Robert Newman's article on Boyer ignitions in *Norton Notice* 213, which has relevance to several of us and is the first sensible piece on the subject that I have seen in print. There are also other items of a technical nature which are far too good to keep to yourselves.

You are of course welcome to re-use anything in the *Roadholder* magazine if this is of any use. We would also acknowledge all our sources and might be able to spread the word about the NCNOC.

I hope you are able to receive this snail mail. We do have E-mail in Europe but not in my house. You might also be amused to learn that *Roadholder* is produced using Pagemaker 4.0 but I think it is quite good nevertheless.

Andy Dunn
NOC Technical Editor
Portsmouth, England

Please feel free to use any articles, technical or otherwise, that you find useful! Of course, acknowledgements are appreciated, and if you don't mind, please drop me a line and let me know which pieces you are using, so I can let the authors know you liked their bit, and so that I know what it is about the Norton Notice that you like. --Ed.

From across the Prairie

I, for one, agree whole-heartedly with Stevan Thomas' comments in his May editorial ("Upon the Avons", May, 1996). While I have been unable to be an active member since 1982, I was fairly active from 1977 to 1982, and have continued to pay my dues each year and read the *Notice* every month. I have often wondered why the same old problems that plagued the Club during my years as an officer and *Norton Notice* Editor have continued during the past 15 years. There were those in the Club back then who seemed to think the Club was just fine, and that nothing should ever change. Some things did change, for the better, while others, unfortunately, stayed the same.

Stevan has accurately assessed the situation. He has made excellent suggestions, all of which should go far to strengthen the Club, now and in the future. I urge the members to give serious thought to his ideas, and to discuss them at future meetings. The current officers seem to have their heads and hearts in the right places, so I have no doubt they will do the right thing for the good of the Club.

One final note to anyone who complained to the Editor about the lateness of the *Notice*: Shame on you! Volunteer to do an issue sometime, and you'll never complain again!

Ride well!

Steve Coburn
Charlottesville, VA

Commando Column

by Jim Carton

■ Tool Time

In days past, the British included a fairly complete and adequate tool kit with their motorcycles. In 1966, I changed the pistons in my '66 BSA Lightning three times using only the tools supplied in the kit. My Sportster, on the other hand, came with no tools nor any place to store any, which told me something about the reliability of that machine. My 1973 750 Norton came with a kit that needed supplementing, but it wasn't bad for a '73. However, my Mark 3 tool kit was a bad joke, and I am still aghast that Norton would include such a bag of junk with the finest motorcycle they ever made! It's true, Norton succeeded in supplying a cheaper, crummier tool kit than any that ever came with a Japanese bike. It was the coming of the second dark age, birthed in the mid '70s, tested in the '80s, and full-blown by the '90s. The product liability bandits who killed the production of light aircraft in the '60s went after new and greener pastures in the '70s: the motorcycle industry. Ever wonder why you're paying \$300 for a helmet in 1995?

Here is a true story. Joe Hamfisted, home mechanic, and friends Hobart and Dellbert know the only way to successfully work on their motorcycles at home is with a case of beer (the beer dampens the fear factor for the 90 mph after-the-work-is-completed test ride). Dellbert forgets to tighten the axle nut, crashes the bike and sees on TV how he can make a fortune in the holy name of Product Liability. This is why our tools

are now made of stamped pot metal and are designed to draw blood as they self-destruct in our hands. The moral of the story is this: if you are going to work on your bike, don't drink beer, choose your friends wisely, and buy some real tools!

A basic tool inventory could include a home maintenance kit and a roadside emergency kit. My own kit includes tools and select spare parts--if we are going to ride 20-year-old motorcycles, we have to be realistic! Here are some things you could include in yours:

- A Gerber or Leatherman multi-tool. It replaces at least 25 "real tools": you can file points, cut and bend wire, crimp electrical connectors, and clean and gap spark plugs, and you have three screwdrivers. It's a real space-saver that looks cool on your belt--impress your friends!
- Latex gloves. They don't take up any space, and you don't have to carry hand cleaner or put your greasy hands back into your leather gloves.
- Hi-temp silicone seal. I've fixed leaking petcocks, exhaust port threads that were blown out, numerous oil leaks, and a leaking water bed. Don't leave home without it.
- Baling wire, electrical tape, and duct tape. No explanation needed, just imagination.
- Two 1 3/4" hose clamps. When your exhaust system falls off, you have something to anchor the baling wire to.
- Mini MagLite (2 AA-cell flashlight). I know many of you don't ride your

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bikes at night, because you're afraid of the dark, but I also know that in the bright sunlight, you can't see under your gas tank because of the shadow.

- Two spare spark plugs. Always.
- 12-volt test light, or Radio Shack pocket auto-range digital multi-meter, catalog #22-169. This is no bigger than a small pocket calculator.
- Spare headlight and taillight bulbs
- Tire gauge
- Valve stem core tool
- Tire levers, and a "one-size-fits-all" inner tube. Size it to fit your smallest-section tire; under-size is better than oversize.
- Combination wrench and socket for every single nut and bolt on the bike, with the exception of the oil drain and oil screen banjo. Tighten those at home once in a while. American sizes are 1/4" through 3/4", and British sizes are 3/16W through 7/16W.
- Shock and header nut spanner. Raber's has a beaut, #KAL 7502, which fits both applications.
- Wire stripper/crimper. K&D #2154 is a gem and is kit-sized.
- Five-inch vise-grips
- Five-inch slip-joint pliers
- Spark plug socket and 3/8" ratchet handle with a 2" extension.
- Allen wrenches: 7/32", 5/16", 3/16", and a 5/32" if you've converted your Amals to Allen screws. Get these as socket drivers, if you don't want to spend the day by the roadside. If your Amals have hex screws, you will need a 9/32" ignition wrench or socket.
- 7/32" ball-end Allen wrench (grind at home), for taking off the intake manifolds. With this it will take two minutes. Without it, two hours! Get this in 1/4" drive.
- Feeler gauges
- Point file
- Flex stone
- Spare master link
- Snap-On #FXW1 and #FXW2, 3/8" wobble extensions. With these, you can torque your head without pulling the tank.

OK. Now we're down to the fancy stuff:

- Heyco #430 half-moon wrench for the rear head studs
- Snap-On #FRES-14, 7/16" torque adaptor for front and rear head studs
- 5/16" fine-thread bolt, to pull the Boyer rotor
- Snap-On #RS-1416B, 7/16" x 1/2" open-end wrench. It will save hours taking your tank off.
- MAC #X2-SD, for the primary level screw
- Snap-On #F22A, for the timing cover inspection cap (must be ground to fit). Sorry, it won't fit your timing chain inspection cap perfectly.
- Snap-On #SSDMR-4B, ratcheting screwdriver. Over ten bits fit in the handle, and three of those are #1, #2, and #3 Pozi-drive. I'll bet you've been using a Phillips on those poor screws all these years! I'm using the prior screwdriver, #SSDD-42 (replaced by #SSDMR-4B), which I've had for years. It's like an old friend, so it's hard to leave it at home or replace it. It has two square-shanked bits, slotted, and #2 and #3 Phillips that go with it, but I think I carry it as a pry-bar.
- 15/16" and 7/8" sockets. I prefer to use these on my axle nuts, since the two items in a combination wrench are bulky.
- Seven-millimeter open-end wrench for carb cable adjustments
- Spoke wrench (tighten your spokes at home).

- Clutch inspection cap tool. There's a factory one in the tool kit, or you can make one.
- My 9/16" x 5/8" combination wrenches have been ground to fit the left inside lower shock nut, and the damper rod nut. The 5/8" also fits the right front engine bolt/isolastic.
- Amal jet wrench with #2 Phillips
- .008" acupuncture needle (thank you, Ken Armann) for poking out the slow jet, or for instant relief from any number of ailments, if you know where to stab yourself and have the nerve to do it!
- Home-made dipstick for the Mark 3 primary oil level, since it doesn't come up to the level screw threads like earlier models.
- 1" x 1"x 3/4" chain breaker
- Small needle-nose pliers
- Spare Boyer
- Fuses
- Electrical connectors: .25" spade connectors (male and female), butt connectors, and ring terminals, and two feet of #16 wire
- Five-minute epoxy
- Don't forget a tire inflator! Your choice: spark plug hole, CO₂ or bicycle type.

I carry all of this, and I can fix nearly any minor roadside break-down.

I know, it seems like a lot. And where are you going to put it all? Well, half of it fits next to the battery, and the other half fits into a leather tool pouch that can be attached to your handrail. Just take the conchos off, so they don't mistake you for a Harley type. And remember, if you can't bump start it, it's too big for you.

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Alan's Wrench

by Alan Goldwater

I just returned from a weekend at the Rally site in Quincy. The Plumas County Fairgrounds staff have done a great job, and there are many improvements, including two new bathrooms, lots of hot water, a stage with new seating, and, currently in progress, two fire pits for group campfires. The Fairgrounds will also permit individual campfires in certain areas, but they must be enclosed in a Weber barbecue or other metal base. I'd like to have 10 or more of these available for the Rally, so if you have one you could lend us, please call me. If you're riding there, I'll arrange for pick-up and transport.

For those of you who don't want to camp, here's a list of Quincy motels. All of them charge about the same: \$50 for one bed, \$55 for two, including tax.

• Ranchito Motel

(916) 283-2265
2020 East Main Street
Rustic but clean, near the Rally site

• Spanish Creek Motel

(916) 283-1200
233 Crescent
Modern, deluxe, free HBO. One mile from Rally in downtown Quincy.

• Gold Pan Motel

(916) 283-3686 or (800) 804-6541
200 Crescent
Big, well equipped, near downtown restaurants

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Ride Report

by Jim Carton

The Pre-Mother's Day Ride started at the Emeryville Denny's with nine Nortoneers (one of them--gulp--BMW-mounted because his Norton wouldn't start), one new Nortoneer, now looking for a project bike, on a Yamaha Seca 900, and a Sportster-mounted FOJ (friend of Jim's).

We went north on Highway 80 to the Suisun Valley Road exit, then made a brief stop at Solano Valley College to pick up Robert Newman and Mike Pawlak and to fix a loose muffler clamp on an undersize pattern exhaust pipe. The next 20 miles were a mixture of Northern California fast-two lane and twisty two-lane through trees and rolling hills that took our little band to the first gas stop at the intersection of Highways 121 and 128. Here we met Jerry Kaplan (on his Long Range Fast-back), and as we were leaving, Ron Halem rode in for breakfast on his Goldstar BSA and was sucked along by our wake, joining the ride!

The next stretch of road had light traffic and lovely twisties until we were past the lake, where it turned to California secondary with no stripe and intermittent pea gravel. We encountered five watercrossings, the last of which would have qualified for a dual-sport ride!

We all stopped at the third crossing to catch a little shade and let the stragglers catch up. Jeff Gruwell went down to the water and caught a turtle! After introducing him around, we bade friend turtle farewell and continued on.

At the last crossing, a rather deep hole in the middle wasn't readily

apparent to the first rider until he was just about in it. It proved Nortonable, though, and most of the following riders found their way around it. Jeff, who was a minute behind, didn't see the line through, and went right down the middle at the deepest point, crossing the underwater obstacle with an unhappy passenger! Like the rest of us, he did little more than get his boots wet.

Back to good fast roads again at the county line, then we stopped at Lower Lake for gas and refreshment. At this point, several riders opted to take Highway 29, which is a bit of a short cut, because they were hungry and wanted to get to the Lord Derby Arms. A small group took the charted route, meeting up with the large group for lunch after another 20 minutes of turns.

John Caraway rode in from Sacramento to join us at the Derby on his new Ducati Monster. A fabulous day, a great ride, good food and a wonderful time for all! Hey--where were you?



In Search of the Perfect Norton

by Robert Newman

■ Isolastics reviewed

Some time ago, I wrote about a bizarre problem with performing Norton isolastic repairs and upgrades. It surprised me to find that some of the Club members at the New York Rally were unaware of this problem. If you're building your first Commando or upgrading to adjustable isolastics on a pre-Mark 3 bike, this potential roadblock could really ruin your day.

The problem is a wrong rubber compound used to mold the isolastic bushings. The effect of using bushings with the wrong compound, in this case, is that engine vibration is transmitted to the frame instead of being absorbed. In short, the bushings are too hard. Today, this problem is entirely avoidable, if you're aware of it. Make sure you buy the right bushings. Good luck.

Before I knew anything about this, Kevin Burrell was having a number of things done to his Commando in my shop, including upgrading to adjustable isolastics. What a rotten feeling I had when the vibration wouldn't go away! I loosened the isolastic adjustments until the handling was affected, but there was no significant change to the harsh vibration at all RPM. I reconsidered the work that had been done on the bike, and only the isolastic change remained suspect. I phoned all the Norton know-it-alls I could think of, and was told some

tales, including: "Isolastics have to break in", or "rubber softens with age", and even an honest "I don't know". The worst response was, "We haven't had any trouble with them. You're the only one."

A little encouragement came from Alan Goldwater, who mentioned that there was a special tool, called a "durometer", for measuring the density or resilience of rubber and plastic compounds. With this in mind, I checked the stock of isolastic bushings at Raber's, and made a discovery. In a large bin full of early-type front bushings, there was a single bushing of a different appearance. It felt softer than the others. I took it to the counter with one of the others, and Bob told me that the odd one was left over from an earlier batch, and that all of them had come from Andover Norton. They were obviously different--when I bounced them off the countertop, the hard one made a little hop, while the soft one grazed the ceiling tiles! Apparently, both the early and late isolastic bushings were being supplied with a uselessly hard rubber. What to do?

I sent a letter to Andover Norton detailing the problem and asking for help. No response. So I sent some drawings and samples to a molding company in El Monte, and prepared to have isolastics made. To this day, I consider it very shabby for

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Mike Jackson to have ignored such a serious issue.

Meanwhile, Kevin had taken his bike and was riding with the vibration. It wasn't long before the mounting bungs tore out of his Interstate tank. Can you imagine your Commando without isolastics?!

Was there major confusion at Andover Norton about whether the bushing compound or the limit rubber compound was right for making new bushings? Spares originally made by them for early isolastics contained the correct soft rubber bushings with hard rubber limiters between them. Late (Mark 3) isolastics have always been molded in only one operation and use only one compound of rubber. What happened to cause the change from the soft compound to the hard compound? Did someone at Andover Norton demand a change? Did a vendor make a change by accident? Did Norton change vendors and miscommunicate an important detail to the new source? (Did Norton notice?) I favor the latter theory in view of Norton's poor reputation for communicating with anybody.

Whatever the reason, the bad isolastics were sent out to dealers who had no idea what they were getting, and who in turn sold them to us.

One of the first dealers to recognize the problem was Les Emery of Fair Spares England. Since he assembles new Commandos from new parts, his mechanics were on to this quickly. Even though Les is one of the largest-volume Norton parts

buyers in the world, and Andover Norton is hardly a long-distance call away from him, he had to throw up his hands after trying to get action from Norton, and eventually hired an outside contractor to make some proper isolastics. I found out about this from Phil Radford (Fair Spares America), who had originally supplied the problem isolastics.

The news came just in time to stop me from finalizing my contract with the southern California molding company. Showing a proper concern for his customers, Les took back the bad units and exchanged them for good ones at no charge. Phil sent the new parts as soon as they came in. Kevin's bike now runs fine, but the mechanic wound up duplicating his labor for free!

How can a Norton builder avoid the bad isolastics? Upon casual examination, good isolastics will really bounce. It's easy if you're working with early-type individual bushings, which are no problem to pinch between thumb and forefinger, and fling on edge onto a hard tabletop. They will take off. Bad ones will bounce somewhat, but with a comparatively less resilient response. Mark 3 type isolastics are harder to throw at a tabletop, but an experiment with a front unit had it bouncing two to three feet. If you want to make sure, go to Raber's shop in San Jose; he has a durometer and is quite familiar with this problem.

It has been over four years since this problem arose, and I still have two questions: What happened to all the bad stock, and Why do the

main men at Andover Norton display so little courtesy and/or concern for Norton owners by failing to issue a service bulletin, which would spare much grief and unnecessary labor?

("Allen's Wrench", continued from page 9)

Lou Caputo joined me in Quincy for the Rally preview, and has planned some great rides. There's this one road with perfect new blacktop and about 20 miles of the best Norton sweepers you've ever seen. Ask Tom Dabel--Lou couldn't hold back, and was dragging pegs, even on a Beemer!

Pre-registration for the Rally is still lagging. What are you waiting for? Although it's part of the job, I'm losing sleep over this one, so please have mercy on a poor Norton lover and send in your form (and a check) now.

("Commando Column", continued from page 9)

Thank you, Robert "Flat-Bed" Newman, for the fuel article. I pulled out my Champion N7YCs after the Rallye de Milani, and they showed signs of blistering, which would indicate a lean condition. I installed colder plugs and will probably raise the needle or shim it as it warms up.

It seems Jim makes a minor roadside repair for a Club member on almost every ride. He really does carry this stuff, and without saddlebags!

Member Profile

by John Covell

Greg Braithwaite

Age: 21
City: Aptos
Personal: Single
NOC member since: 1992

Occupation

Student at UC Santa Cruz, majoring in History

How did you become involved with NOC?

"Ken Armann got my bike running, and said, 'Come down and check out a bunch of crazy guys.'"

Club offices held

Current Vice President

Norton(s) owned

750 Atlas--"My first bike."

Other motorcycles

None

What first interested you in the Norton?

"I wanted a Brit bike, I'm on a limited budget, and I stumbled upon the Atlas. I love it."

Other hobbies/interests

Drums, socializing with my friends

Favorite motorcycling road/ride

Highway 9

If you could redesign the Norton, what would you change?

"I prefer not to second-guess the designers. When I'm older..."

Favorite/most embarrassing episode on a Norton

"Putting a nice dent in my gorgeous new red tank. I stopped at the roadside, kickstarting it, and smacked the tank with the handlebars."

One Small Kickstart For Man, One Giant Kickstart For Mankind

by Art Sirota

On April 18, 1996 the local delegation from the Norton Owners Club was on hand with a big brass band to welcome Mr. Tim Coburn as he pulled up in front of Ann's Coffee Shop in Menlo Park and parked his motorcycle in the new "Motorcycle Only" designated area. Well, it wasn't quite a brass band, but I was playing a harmonica and it *does* have brass reeds!

Tim, a long time resident of Menlo Park, had recently fought City Hall and won, and it only cost him fifty dollars. In late January, a local constable had the audacity to cite Mr. Coburn for parking in a dubious spot at the end of a long row of parking spaces on Santa Cruz Avenue. The spot in question is too small for a car, is shaded by a nice desiduous tree, and is perfectly suited for a motorcycle.

"I had been parking a Norton Commando motorcycle there almost every morning for five years," said Mr. Coburn.

True, there were faded horizontal lines painted menacingly on the pavement, but then there was no sign saying you *couldn't* park a motorcycle there while enjoying a leisurely breakfast at Ann's.

So Tim paid the \$25 fine and rode his Norton over to the Menlo Park Police Station to have a chat with the Powers That Be. A charming, professional young woman there named Tammy promised to refer the matter to the parking authority. Tim, you see, wanted the space in question to be marked clearly as motorcycle parking, much as they have done in

Palo Alto on University Avenue.

After a few days passed, Tim contacted Tammy and was informed that the space had been deemed "too dangerous" for motorcycle parking.

Undaunted by political red tape, Tim took the matter to one of our city's highest authorities, Janet Dolan, the City Manager. She listened patiently to Tim's tale of injustice and promised to get back to him.

She didn't.

A week later, Tim called Ms. Dolan's secretary and was told that a new sign was being prepared by the Public Works Department to mark the space in question a motorcycle only parking spot.

So, the very next day, Tim parked his Norton in the spot and immediately got another ticket. With second ticket firmly in hand, Tim returned to Ms. Dolan's office and protested. They promised to write a note to the Police Chief, whose office is about 120 feet away, and explain why Tim's second offense was a *fait accompli*.

Tim paid the ticket.

The new sign was posted about two and a half months later.

The public has another long-suffering local hero to celebrate. The innocuous little sign will allow motorcyclists whose bikes are legally registered to park on lovely Santa Cruz Avenue and enjoy the local scenery like any other citizen. This spot will henceforth and forever be known to local motorcycle cognoscenti as the "Tim Coburn Memorial Parking Spot".

May Meeting Minutes

■ Northern California Norton Owners Club May 9, 1996 meeting Prince of Wales Pub, San Mateo

The May meeting was called to order by President Maya Lai at 8:10 p.m. Jerry Joliff sold tickets for the "50/50" raffle, and the Pre-Mother's Day Ride was discussed.

The Rally was an important topic. Apparently there is a big event in Ohio which conflicts with the Rally dates. The Dick Mann event in Carson City, Nevada is also a conflict, but is less of a problem because it is only about an hour away from the Rally site (and we are invited). We need pre-registrations to come in soon, so we can pay the deposit on a facility.

AHRMA promoter Mike Lightfoot announced the Quincy Short Track event at a recent race meet, which leads to the conclusion that a race at our Rally is looking pretty likely. Lou Caputo has made a few trips up to the Quincy area to further his efforts planning stellar rides. Harry Bunting reported that he has sent out about 50 letters to vendors, soliciting donations for prizes, and is awaiting responses. Maya read two letters, one regarding smoking at meetings and the other from the Club in England. After some discussion, generally along the lines that smokers should be able to smoke whether it bothers the non-smokers or not, (sigh...) it didn't get to a vote. Also proposed and tabled until later was the question of continuing to hold meetings on Thursday nights. It was mentioned that it seemed unfair to the people who could not make it to the meeting to vote on the issue, so Maya said we would vote on this by mail ballot.

Club Meeting Schedule

The Club meets the second Thursday of each month at 8 p.m.

July 18 - 21 Quincy

Aug. 8 Connecticut Yankee
100 Connecticut St.
San Francisco
(415) 552-4440

Sept. 12 Harry's Hofbrau
399 W. El Camino Real
Mountain View
(415) 964-8455

Oct. 10 Location TBD

Nov. 14 Prince of Wales Pub

Treasurer Bruce McGregor read the ~~month~~ly report, then we had a book raffle. *A Racing Legend-Norton* went for \$20 to Ron Bastiaans, after spirited bidding.

Ken Armann asked for Ride Points for himself and a group of riders who were on their way to the John Bria Ride when they got plowed by some nitwit who ran a light. Ken was hit broadside (fortunately, he had only minor injuries) and his Mercury was totaled. Joe Edwards and Macieg Maji were with him. All three will get 6 points.

Maya gave a warning about some locals on Skyline who are a little fed up with being passed by motorcycles. She was out with two friends, and as one of them was going around a pickup truck, the driver skidded the truck sideways across the road, forcing the last Norton to crash, and then sped off. It was a beige truck (a Toyota?)—watch out for it. Andy McKerral noted that he's seen a lot of motorists cutting off bikes over the last four months.

The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Meeting Points Update

As we announced earlier this year, Club members not only earn "ride points" for participating in Club rides, they can also earn "meeting points" for (you guessed it) attending Club meetings. Here are the stats from the May meeting:

Nortons (6 points)

Ken Armann
Ron Douglas
Joe Edwards
Brad Green
Brian Hill
Neil Kelly
Stevan Thomas
Scott Weir

Other British makes (4 points)

Frank Holden (BSA)

Non-British makes (2 points)

Preston Little (BMW)
Ruth Middleton (HD)

Other (1 point)

Jeff Gruwell ('65 Mustang)

A procedural note: if you do not write down what you rode to a meeting, or if what you write is not legible, you will only get one point. (If we can't even read your name, you get zero!) If you want points, please print your name and conveyance so we can read it. This applies to ride points as well.

Classified

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■ FOR SALE

1955 Norton ES2 500 single. 29,000 miles on the clock, 200 on fresh engine. \$500 paint job. Original British plates and tax disk. Includes books and manuals. Clean machine and solid runner. \$3,500 o.b.o.

**Mike (510) 658-9661 days,
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(510) 547-2007 (9/96)**

■ FOR SALE

Restored 1963 Atlas Scrambler
\$3,800 **Paul (415) 584-3200 (8/96)**

■ FOR SALE OR TRADE

Cleaning the Gruwell garage. Have steel Roadster tanks and Roadster seats, Yamaha mag wheels--dual disc 19" front, single disc 18" rear with cush drive. All you need to make these work on a Commando are spacers and a 42-tooth rear sprocket. Includes speedo drive and speedo. \$150 for the wheels, or will trade for Norton stuff, tools, music CDs or ??

Jeff Gruwell (510) 432-9999 (8/96)

■ FOR SALE

1984 Pontiac TransAm (sort of like an automotive Interstate). There aren't too many cars I've sold that I would like to have sold to someone I

know. This is one of the few. It's a good car to fix up for you or your teenager. Great buy at \$2,200 o.b.o. **Jeff Gruwell (510) 432-9999 (8/96)**

■ **FOR SALE OR PARTING OUT**

1969 Commando 20M3S - rear frame loop has been cut, no side panels, seat, headlight or front wheel. Looks like it only had 7,100 miles. Engine and primary partially disassembled, have about all except pistons. Amal 930s, instruments, f.g. Roadster/S tank with newer black paint, good front forks, etc. Possible trade for goodies for featherbed Manx Atlas project, like 3 gallon alloy Manx tank and rearsets. **Frank Holden (415) 593-4106 eves.** Frank_Holden@qmgates.affymax.com (07/96)

■ **FOR SALE**

Amal Mark I 1/2 carburetors. Get rid of your choke cables and still have a choke! Looks like a Mark I, but has

Mark II lever choke and large-bore float needle. \$150 ea.

Mostly British (916) 927-2748 (07/96)

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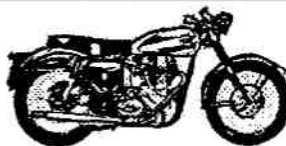
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21st National Norton Rally
July 18th -21st, 1996
at the Plumas County Fairgrounds
in Quincy, California

All British Bikes Welcome!

Quincy is in the heart of the Plumas National Forest, about 80 miles northwest of Lake Tahoe and Reno, and 50 miles south of Lassen National Park. This special location offers some of California's best scenery and riding roads, as well as great fishing, hiking and other recreational activities.

Registration

Mail-in before July 1:

Adults \$35
Children \$17.50
(under 6 free)

At the gate:

Adults \$40
Children \$20
(under 6 free)

Admission Includes

Three nights camping
Two dinners - live music
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Extras

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the Rally is just \$3 / day

=====

REGISTRATION FORM

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You can also preregister by phone with a credit card (408) 241-1812

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CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

No. of Adults _____ @ \$35 = _____ No. of Children _____ @\$17.50 = _____

Pay by: check cash money order VISA Mastercard
Credit card # _____ exp. ____ / ____

Checks should be payable to Norton Owners Club Rally Fund.

Northern California Norton Owners Club

Member Survey

June, 1996

The following questions are intended to assess Club members' feelings on a variety of issues. Please circle the appropriate response or write in your answer to each question. When you have completed the survey, please mail it to Stevan Thomas (address on reverse). **Please mail your survey no later than July 25, 1996!** A summary of member responses will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Norton Notice*. *Thank you for your time--your opinion is important!*

1. How many years have you been a Norton Club member? 0 - 1 2 5 8 10+
2. How did you hear about the Club? _____
3. Why did you join? _____
4. What do you expect out of the Club? _____

5. How many Nortons do you have? _____
6. How long have you had it/them? _____
6. How many other motorcycles? _____
7. What kind(s)? British Italian BMW American Spanish Japanese Other
8. How often do you ride your Norton(s)? Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly Never
11. How often do you ride your other motorcycle(s)? Daily Weekly Monthly Yearly Never
12. Is your Norton your most reliable motorcycle? Yes No
13. Do you do your own maintenance regularly? Irregularly?
14. Does someone else do your maintenance regularly or irregularly? Yes No
15. Do you go on Club rides? Always Almost always Sometimes Hardly ever Never
16. What keeps you from going on Club rides? _____
17. Are Club rides too long? too short? too far away? too fast? about right?
18. How important are monthly Club meetings to you? Very Not very Not at all
Why or why not? _____

19. Which Club meetings do you attend? All The ones near my house Some A few None
20. What keeps you from going to more meetings? Too far away Weeknights inconvenient
Too early Too late Electrics don't work well enough to ride at night Don't like them
21. Do you like having Club meetings on Thursdays? Some other weeknight? On a weekend? On a ride?
22. If you live a long way from the Peninsula ("Pharflung" members), would you go to meetings if they were nearer your home or held during a ride near your home? Yes No Wouldn't matter
23. What would you like to cover at meetings? At what level of detail? _____

(continued)

(continued from front)

24. How do you feel about smoking at meetings? Think it should be allowed Think it should only be allowed in places with good ventilation Don't care - it doesn't bother me Don't like it
Dislike it so much it keeps me from meetings
25. Is it important to you that Club officers own Nortons and actively participate in Club rides, in addition to attending meetings? Very important Important Not important Doesn't matter
Why or why not? _____

26. Do you think owning a Norton should be a requirement for Club membership? Yes No
27. Do you like the idea of an associate membership for those without Nortons? Associates would not be able to vote or hold office. Like it Not sure Don't like it
28. How important is the Club newsletter (the *Norton Notice*) to you? Very Somewhat Not very Not at all
29. Do you read the *Norton Notice*? Always Sometimes Never If I have nothing else to read
30. What do you like best about the *Norton Notice*? Check as many of the following as you wish, ranking them in order of importance (1 being most important and 6 being least important):
___ Technical articles ___ Travel articles ___ Want ads ___ Literary features
___ Ride reports ___ Meeting reports ___ Officers' columns
___ Special events coverage ___ Upcoming events page
31. What else would you like to see in the *Norton Notice*? _____

32. Do you like the new *Norton Notice*? Love it Like it It's O.K. Don't care
Don't like it Hate it

Other comments: _____

Thanks, again, for taking the time to complete this survey. The Norton Owners Club is *your* Club. We hope that by understanding what you want out of it, we can keep it moving in the right direction.

Please mail your completed survey to:
Stevan Thomas
Editor, *Norton Notice*
830 Broderick Street, #3
San Francisco, CA 94115