

Norton Notice

Volume 2 Issue 1

January 1979

"ODD BODKINS" (reprinted with the permission of Dan O'Neill)



ABOUT THE NEW FORMAT:

AS YOU CAN SEE, THE NORTON NOTICE WAS PRINTED IN A REDUCED FORMAT THIS MONTH. THE REASONS FOR MAKING THIS CHANGE AT THIS TIME ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. IT COSTS LESS TO PRINT.
2. IT COSTS LESS TO MAIL.
3. IT IS EASIER TO STASH.

I HOPE YOU'LL STILL ENJOY READING IT.

STEVE

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THE NORTON NOTICE IS
A PUBLICATION OF THE GREAT
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH
OF THE





The NORTON NOTICE is published monthly by the Northern California Branch of the NOC.

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(415) 747-0326 HOME
(415) 497-6601 WORK

ADVERTISING

Current and prospective members may place any NORTON-related ads in the TRADING POST by writing the pertinent information in as concise a form as possible and sending it to the Editor. Ads will run free of charge for two months, and may be discontinued or renewed if so desired.

Commercial enterprises may advertise in the NORTON NOTICE for a nominal fee, which will help to offset printing costs and thereby support the club. Advertising rates are:

	<u>1 issue</u>	<u>3 issues</u>	<u>6 issues</u>
1/4page	\$5.00	\$13.50	\$25.00
1/2page	\$9.00	\$25.00	\$45.00

MEMBER INPUT

Members are encouraged to submit anything that might be of interest to the readers of the NORTON NOTICE. Articles, comments, technical information, travelogues, jokes, cartoons, photographs, and whatever are all welcome. Please send anything you'd like to see in the NORTON NOTICE to the Editor, who will do his best to get everything in here sooner or later. Handwritten items should be legible, please, and in order to appear in the next issue should be sent in by the middle of the month at the latest. Thanks.

MEMBERSHIP

There are three categories of membership in the Northern California Branch of the NOC. These are:

FULL MEMBERS: Full members are dues-paying members of the NOC, and therefore have full voting privileges at any general meeting of the NOC and at all branch meetings, and also any privileges resulting from affiliation of the Club with any other organization.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS: This category of membership was established so that any NORTON enthusiast could join the Northern Calif. Branch for a small fee, without having to join the NOC as a full member. Associate members are required to pay only the branch dues, and have full voting privileges at all branch meetings. Any individual wishing to become an associate member must at the time of joining and membership renewal be the owner of a NORTON motorcycle, as required in the NOC by-laws. Associate members will receive the NORTON NOTICE each month, but will not receive the ROADHOLDER magazine, which is published bi-monthly for members of the NORTON OWNERS CLUB, and distributed through the branch secretary to full members.

SOCIAL MEMBERS: In order to allow those who do not own a NORTON to be associated with the club, and thereby hopefully find one to buy, the branch provides the category of "Social membership". Social members may not vote on branch or club issues or for officers, but are welcome to participate in all branch activities. Social members will receive the NORTON NOTICE each month, and are encouraged to follow up on any leads regarding NORTON motorcycles for sale. The Editor will try to help all social members in this regard.

CURRENT DUES AND PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED:

	<u>PAY:</u>	<u>RECEIVE:</u>
Full members:	\$20	<u>NORTON NOTICE</u> & <u>ROADHOLDER</u>
Assoc. members:	\$5	<u>NORTON NOTICE</u>
Social members:	\$5	<u>NORTON NOTICE</u>

NOTE: The \$20 paid annually by full members includes \$5 branch dues and \$7 (\$15) NOC dues which will be sent to the NOC membership secretary by the branch secretary.

TRADING POST

FOR SALE

1974 Commando 850 parts bike: \$500 firm
 1969 N-15 750 parts bike: make an offer
 LLOYD PENTECOST: (408) 246-9725

1971 Commando 750 "Hi-Rider"- needs to
 have carb rebuilt and new main bearings;
 new paint, good tires, 2 tanks, owner's
 manual, tools, 6' chain & lock: offer
 DEAN HATTEN: (415) 641-9471

1975 Commando 850 Roadster- black, 2660
 miles, excellent condition: asking \$1500
 WAYNE SEEBERG: (415) 229-0414, 526-0657

1974 Commando 850 John Player Special-
 black, extra fairing, Morris mags, all
 stock equipment included: \$3000
 DAVE DeBELLA: (415) 348-3746

"Kelley's Commando Spares Column":

Fastback tank- new, red/silver: \$100
 Fastback seat- just re-covered: \$75
 Fastback tailfin- primed only: \$35
 'S' mufflers- new, unused: \$50 each
 MkIII mufflers- new, unused: \$45 each
 850 head pipes- very good: \$25 each
 Roadster tank- fiberglass, blue: \$50
 MkIII side panels- new, red: \$45 set
 Oil tank- 1970 type: \$20
 Roadster seat- 1970 type, exc.: \$50
 MkIII Roadster seat- brand new: \$80
 MkII & MkIII tach/speedo housings: \$7
 NORMAN KELLEY: (916) 441-0898

WANTED

Craven rack (chrome or black) for Com.
 GENE AUSTIN: 573-9559

Perfect Atlas head pipes; AMAL GP carbs;
 1970 Commando centerstand; head pipes &
 headlight plexiglas for production racer
 NORM KELLEY: (916) 441-0898

Stock 1973/1974 Commando 850 mufflers-
 must be in good condition; will gladly
 pay the freight charges
 CHRIS COUPER: (805) 528-0834 LATE PM
 or write: 325 Grove Street
 Los Osos, CA 93402

ATTENTION ADVERTISERS: Please remember
 to let me know if the ad should be taken
 out after the first run, or if you want
 it to run again after the second month.
 Also, it makes this job much easier if
 ads are neatly written and sent to me
 rather than called in by phone. Thanks.
 STEVE

PAID ADVERTISEMENTS



cycle sports

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S

Leading Norton Dealer

IN & ON NORTONS SINCE 1970

SALES + PARTS + EXPERT SERVICE

dunstall
 POWER

NOW CLOSING OUT
 DUNSTALL ODDS & ENDS
35% TO 50% off

2355 EL CAMINO REAL

AT SAN TOMAS EXPRESSWAY

SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

(408) 247-1313

SELBY MOTORS
 346 El Camino Real
 Redwood City, CA
 (415) 369-4112

NORTON

Selby Motors can take care of NORTON parts
 and service needs, and encourage you to
 stop by in Redwood City and check them out.

Jack, who is now a branch member, runs the
 parts department at Selby's, where you'll
 find a large stock of all motorcycle parts
 and accessories. Jack's got the goodies!

In the service department at Selby's, the
 man to see is Alan, also a member of our
 branch, and a knowledgeable NORTON mechanic
 who will help get that machine running just
 the way it used to. Go give him the business!

SELBY MOTORS
 346 El Camino Real
 Redwood City, CA
 (415) 369-4112

DECEMBER BRANCH MEETING/CHRISTMAS PARTY

Well what can I say? In spite of all our apprehension and misgivings, the branch Christmas party turned out to be a great success! I don't know how many were there that night at the Edinburgh Castle (I'd guesstimate the total to be 35 or 40 by the end of the party), but I do know I heard nothing but compliments from all quarters. I must say that I really had nothing to do with it, and would like to let all of you know that the compliments and thanks should go to Elisabeth Bausch, Pat Austin, Verna Getts, Jamie Gribble, Maya Peterson and others who provided all the fine food we shared. It really was an impressive feast to say the least! As far as I'm concerned, it was ONE FINE PARTY, and I'd like to thank everyone who helped to make it such an enjoyable occasion.

After all that, those of you who didn't come, for one reason or another, are no doubt sorry that you didn't. Well, maybe next time you'll be there. Anyway I'm very sorry so many members missed out on the festivities and fine food we had there.

Needless to say, I suppose, we did not try to conduct any business at the party. All items on the agenda will be brought up at the January meeting instead. STEVE

JANUARY BRANCH MEETING

The meeting this month will be at the same place we met last May (has it really been that long?) when we got together down in the south bay area. The British-American Club, of which Alex Stewart is a member, is located in the Cross Flags Pub at 4255 Williams Road in San José. To get there, take Hwy 280 to the Saratoga Ave. exit, go about 6-8 blocks WEST to Williams Road and turn RIGHT. Since the Cross Flags Pub used to be a house, and is in a residential area, don't expect flashy signs and the like. It really shouldn't be hard to find.

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 11th
 TIME: 7:30 PM
 PLACE: CROSS FLAGS PUB
 4255 WILLIAMS ROAD
 SAN JOSÉ
 PHONE: (408) 257-2717

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The December meeting/Christmas party was a huge success enjoyed by all who attended. You folks who didn't make it missed a very nice time, and, I might add, a great meal! My sincerest thanks to all who brought food, as it really was quite a spread. Indeed it was a very fine evening that bears repeating!

As we start the New Year I want to thank all members for supporting the Branch and its activities, and wish us all the best in 1979.
 BOB

DECEMBER BRANCH RIDE - BREAKFAST AT ALICE'S

Rained out on the 17th, the ride last month was held on the following Sunday, which was, unfortunately, also Christmas Eve. However, a true-blue band of Norton riders braved the chilly morning air and the slippery roads to gather up at Alice's Restaurant for breakfast and some good motorcycle camaraderie. Among the seven or so Nortons present, one was a handsome P-11A belonging to Harold Brum, a former branch member who promptly rejoined the branch and came on the brisk ride down to San Gregorio beach. Also making it up to Alice's that morning was our ex-President, Bob Marshall, who came in four-wheel comfort.
 STEVE

JANUARY BRANCH RIDE

The ride will begin from the parking lot next to the San Mateo Bridge toll plaza, and will probably run through some of the fine riding country up in the hills behind Oakland. No route is planned as yet, so I will bring a good map of east bay hills to the ride venue, and we can decide where we want to go at that time.

Don't forget that the ride will be held exactly one week later in the event of a rain cancellation. If in doubt on the ride morning, please give me a call at 747-0326.

DATE: SUNDAY, JANUARY 14th
 TIME: 10:00 AM
 PLACE: SAN MATEO BRIDGE
 TOLL PLAZA PARKING LOT

It's cold there, so dress warmly.

STEVE

History of NORTON - "The Early Years" (Part 2)

This is part 2 of my abridged version of the first chapter of Dennis Howard's book NORTON, which was published in 1972 by Ballantine Books, Inc. Once again, I wish to thank Mr. Howard and Ballantine for letting me use their material here.

Early in 1907 first Secretary of the Auto Cycle Club Freddie Straight set about the pleasurable task of organising a race for machines not unsimilar to those on sale to the public, and with the great assistance of the Manx authorities it was decided that a short course in the Isle of Man would be most suitable. Two classes were to be catered to, namely single- and twin-cylinder machines, the only restriction being that fuel would be allocated on a ration basis: 90mpg for the singles and 75mpg for the twins. Efficient silencers had to be fitted, and pedalling gear was allowed to assist a flagging engine on the steeper parts of the course (!). The start and finish was at St. Johns and riders were obliged to cover the 16 mile circuit ten times. Each competitor had to make a compulsory 10 minute rest stop upon the completion of five laps, and riders were dispatched at one minute intervals.

Rambrandt Fowler, who died just a few years ago, was the winner of the twin-cylinder class and made the fastest lap at 42.91mph but not before he had repaired countless punctures, changed at least half a dozen sparking plugs and narrowly missed becoming a blazing inferno when he charged through a pack of fallen machines 'all well lit up'. The original telegram from the Isle of Man informing the Birmingham factory of Fowler's win read as follows:

NORTON MOTOR WON EASILY. RECORD TIME.
44 OUNCES OF PETROL TO SPARE.
FOWLER DROVE MAGNIFICENTLY.

The winning machine was privately owned but had received some attention from James Norton. It weighed about 180 pounds and was powered by the French V-twin engine of 617cc. Automatic inlet valves were fitted, and the 'tuning' amounted to increasing their light return spring pressure to about eight pounds.

The Norton possessed a very long wheelbase which was considered to give superior road holding qualities and in proportion the frame was quite low, leading some wags of the day to explain that this provided a shorter distance to fall in the event of a crash. All the braking the machine could boast was a stirrup type on the front wheel, not unsimilar to those fitted to cycles of the period, and the rear wheel relied upon the movement of a fibre shoe, operated by the rider's foot, acting upon the natural groove in the belt rim. 'Ixion' (Canon B.H.Davis of The Motor Cycle) maintained that a stout pair of hobnail boots served the purpose far more satisfactorily in retarding the forward progress of these early machines. It is said that the very first pit signal was made during the first TT race, for Pa Norton, having noticed that Fowler had not been operating the tank-top mounted hand oil-pump, the only system by which the motor received its vital lubrication, had written in bold letters on a suitably large card the word 'OIL' and had thrust it into the view of a doubtless sore and very tired Fowler to set about the necessary task.

Although much attention was given to the competitive aspect of the Norton's progress during these formative years, it would now appear that the 'bread and butter' machines were few and far between. However, by 1909 no less than eight models were listed in the current Buyer's Guide, ranging from two small models fitted with 2 1/2 hp JAP engines, and six with Norton engines of between 3 1/2 and 5 hp, prices ranging from 36 to 72 guineas. At this period, magneto ignition became as standard a fitting as the Norton carburettor. The London agents for Norton's machines were Harrods and Gamages. The old saying that 'Racing improves the breed' was obviously in the forefront of James Norton's mind, for he had raced his own models from 1909 until 1911 but retiring in the Isle of Man on all three occasions. He therefore decided not to take part himself in competitive sport again but to attend to the needs of other riders of his machines.

NEXT MONTH: The third and concluding part of "The Early Years" features the introduction of the mandatory new safety helmets and side-valve engines, and the racing exploits of D.R.O'Donovan

What If It Rains?

Do we ride in the rain? What if it's not raining, but looks like it might? How can I find out if the ride is on or off? What if it's definitely off?

Well folks, it looks like the rainy season is with us once again, and therefore a few words about our branch ride rain procedure might be in order since many new members may well have asked questions like the above on the morning of the December ride.

Although our fellow Norton riders in Britain might scoff, most of us do not like to ride in the rain. Not only can it be very dangerous, particularly on our twisty roads, but, in spite of whatever any hard core British biker might say, it just is not much fun. Therefore the following policy evolved.

1. If on the morning of the ride, there is rain falling where you are and it doesn't look as though it's going to clear, then you can be fairly sure that the ride is off.
2. If it isn't raining, but looks like it might, then you should call me to find out whether the ride has been postponed or not. I will be a clearing house on the morning of the ride, and will try to be near the phone from 8 to 9.
3. In the event that the ride is postponed, plan on coming exactly one week later. We will be meeting at the same time and at the same venue. Should it rain again, then we will probably bag it and hope for better weather the next month.

Hot Shirts To Go - Steve has 'em

The beautiful new Northern California Branch NOC T-shirts are still on sale, even though a large number of them were scarfed up at the Christmas party last month. For anyone who hasn't seen it yet, the silkscreen design is a very impressive looking one indeed. It is the new branch logo, designed by Bob Bausch, and consists of the logo of the Norton Owners Club, surrounded by the Union Jack on the left and the Stars and Stripes on the right, with the whole thing surrounded by a blue border containing the branch name. The shirts are white with the silkscreen done in red and blue. The Norton logo is silkscreened on the back in blue, so anyone behind you will know you ride a very fine motorcycle indeed!

The T-shirts, and a limited supply of French-cut shirts in ladies' sizes and a few tank-tops, are all on sale now for only \$5. I also have a few long- and short-sleeved sweat shirts for \$10 and \$8 respectively. Please let me know if you want one (or more), and how you want to get it. They will be sold at meetings and rides from now on.

PAID ADVERTISEMENTS

T.T. MOTORS
2800 Adeline
Berkeley, CA
(415)845-8235

Bob Gaulin is the man to see at T.T. when you're in the market for parts, service, or advice. Bob handles all the Norton business at T.T. Motors and will be able to get you whatever you need for your Norton.

All card-carrying members will be given T.T.'s 10% NOC discount, and so it's worth the trip to Berkeley when you need to get parts.

T.T. MOTORS
2800 Adeline
Berkeley, CA
(415)845-8235

MOTORCYCLES UNLIMITED
5776 Paradise Drive
Corte Madera, CA
(415) 924-0327

Alex McLean, a member of our branch now and a Norton dealer for a good many years, has a large stock of Norton parts and Dunstall accessories for your Norton. His shop in Corte Madera is definitely the place to go in north bay area for all your needs, and is even worth the trip if you're farther afield.

Anyone interested in seeing a fine example of the Norton Manx, should plan to stop by Alex's shop and go upstairs to see his collection of older machines. They're beautiful!

MOTORCYCLES UNLIMITED
5776 Paradise Drive
Corte Madera, CA
(415) 924-0327

TECHNICAL TIPS

This month Len Allen is taking a well-deserved rest from his Technical Tips writing duties so that I can pass on some very interesting info sent in by two of our members. Here they are.

CHRIS COUPER'S SUGGESTIONS

1. If you don't already have one, get a quartz headlamp. I use a stock automotive CIBIE 7" conversion and am totally satisfied. The bulb has lasted over three years.
2. I have been running with a Lucas RITA ignition for some time now and am thoroughly impressed. After reading an article in the ROADHOLDER, I ordered my system direct from England and saved 50%. The bike kick-starts so easily now that I removed my electric starter. It is very simple to fabricate a plug for the primary chaincase out of 1/4" aluminum. (Removing the electric starter sure sounds like a fine idea to me.-Ed.)
3. Be advised that the correct oil capacity for electric-start primaries is 340cc. and not 200cc. as published in the manuals. This will cure any peculiar knocking noises you might hear from the primary, particularly when the engine is cold.

CHRIS COUPER
Los Osos

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

LARRY RANDALL

English Specialist

*West Bay Cycle
Dismantlers, Inc.*

ENGINE REBUILDING & MACHINING FACILITIES
USED PARTS & ACCESSORIES
USED MOTORCYCLES

750 San Antonio Road
Palo Alto, California 94303

(415) 494-8033

Larry Randall is a good person to go to if you need any parts for your Norton or other bikes. He's had exactly what I wanted on two occasions that I've been to his shop, and he'll probably have just what you need too. He also knows a lot about Nortons and how to keep them running the way they should, so don't hesitate to ask him for advice. I'm sure he'll be glad to help.

WEST BAY CYCLE DISMANTLERS, Inc.
750 San Antonio Road, Palo Alto
(415) 494-8033

DAVE WADIAK'S ADVICE ON COILS

I recently learned of a deficiency in the Norton electrical system which I'd like to pass on to the readers. Many articles have been written up in all the motorcycle magazines about the typically poor performance of stock coils. Although I don't know which issue, I believe that CYCLE recently ran a series of articles on this subject. Their study showed most motorcycle coils produce only 8 to 15K volts at maximum performance with the ignition system properly tuned. The most striking conclusion they came up with is that the Norton coils are nearly the worst of all they tested, producing only about 8 to 10K volts, if I recall their figures correctly. After studying this, I bought a pair of Scherba's Internal Ballast automotive coils for about \$6 each, and replaced the stock Norton coils and removed the stock ballast resistor. The electrical hookup is the same: negative primary terminal to the points and positive terminal to the battery. Even though the Norton is positive ground, this does not affect the coil operation or wiring. The spark plugs should be regapped to 0.035".

Auto coils with internal ballast should be chosen with no less than 3.0 Ohms resistance measured between the two primary terminals. Current passes thru the points when they close, and the points can only take about 4 amps. The ballast resistor limits the points current when they close to energize the spark coil(s). Since the points are constructed of light gauge metal to prevent 'point bounce' or 'float', the amount of current they can tolerate without melting is limited. For a DC system:

CURRENT = 4 AMPS (MAXIMUM)

VOLTAGE = 12 VOLTS

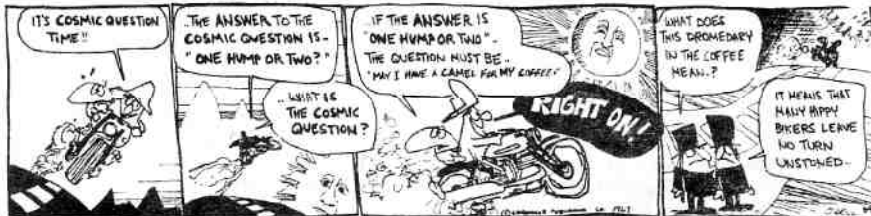
$R = V/I = 12/4 = 3 \text{ OHMS (MINIMUM)}$

The automotive coils function better than the Norton coils because they have more windings to store more electrical energy. This added power is bought at the expense of a higher drain on the battery, but I have not noticed any problem on my MkIII. Apparently the alternator is of sufficient capacity to keep the battery at full charge, even with the headlight on.

DAVE WADIAK
Sunnyvale

ODD BODKINS (Reprinted with the permission of Dan O'Neill)

Here are a couple of Dan O'Neill's more esoteric strips for your amusement or whatever.



MY THANKS TO THE NEW YORKER FOR THE GOODIE HERE



"We've had the T-shirts made, gentlemen. The question now is, shall we wear them?"