

Norton

Notice



Newsletter of the Northern California Branch

NO. 55

DEC 1982

1982 NOC INTER-BRANCH QUIZ

It is proposed to hold an inter-branch quiz to find the most Norton-knowledgeable member; the idea being for each branch to hold a quiz evening between January 1st and April 30th, 1983. The branch secretary will forward the three top scorers' names and addresses to me so that the thirty question paper for the intermediate heat can be sent to them in May/June time. The finalists for the quiz will be selected by the NOC Committee and they will be invited to attend the Annual Rally for the last thirty question paper set by Committee members, this event being in mid-July. A condition of entry to this quiz is that each member must, if able to qualify, attend the Annual Rally day for the Final. Overseas members are not subject to the condition of entry; alternative arrangements can be made to accommodate their entry to the quiz.

The contest would, I hope, become a yearly event; the prize for which I hope will be worth the effort needed by the participants.

The scope of the questions set by the Committee will cover the history of the Norton marque, machine details, competition results, Norton personalities, and knowledge of the NOC through its years of existence.

Please advise me by Dec. 14, 1982 whether or not your branch will be participating and, if possible, the branch quiz date(s).

Many thanks and good luck.

Phil Cox

Phil Cox, NOC Chairman
Canal Cottage, Caen Hill
Devizes, Wiltshire
England

Upcoming Branch Events

<u>DATE</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
December 11 (Saturday)	4:00 P.M.	Brooks Cyclery 1615 Almaden Rd. San Jose	December meeting/ Christmas party
December 19	10:00 A.M.	Sambo's Restaurant 3360 Castro Valley Blvd. Castro Valley	Mt. Diablo ride
January 13	7:30 P.M.	Edinburgh Castle 950 Geary St. San Francisco	January meeting
January 16	10:00 A.M.	Alice's Restaurant Skylonda	Coast ride (bring your brass monkeys!)

NOTICE: In the event of rain on the day of a club ride, the ride is automatically postponed one week. Also, riders should have plenty of gasoline by the scheduled departure time and all "personal problems" should be taken care of.

Norton Notice

is published monthly by the NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH of the NORTON OWNERS CLUB. Its sole purpose is to inform and entertain members regarding all aspects of the Norton Motorcycle including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque.

PRESIDENT

Art Sirota
P.O. Box 8
La Honda, Ca. 94020
(415) 747-0740

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY/ TREASURER

Tom Horton
250 Curtner Ave. #26
Palo Alto, Ca. 94306
(415) 493-2157

VICE PRESIDENT

Tom Dabel
(408) 272-0369

NORTON NOTICE EDITOR

Gene Austin
985 E. Grant Pl.
San Mateo, Ca. 94402
(415) 573-9559

RECORDING SECRETARY

Phil Radford
(408) 293-4548

OCCASIONAL RIDE MARSHAL

John Padilla
(415) 237-7148



Norton Notice is a reflection of its readership who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, joke, or photograph (original or otherwise), so long as it is in good taste, so that other Norton enthusiasts can enjoy it. For branch members who cannot attend meetings and rides, Norton Notice affords them an excellent opportunity to share experiences and information with the membership at large and to bring the branch members closer together. The deadline for items to be submitted for the following month's publication is the 20th of each month.

Current or prospective members may place advertisements for Norton-related material in Norton Notice by sending the information to the Norton Notice staff at the address listed. There is no charge for private ads but commercial or business ads will not be accepted due to the extra work involved.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH OF THE NORTON OWNERS CLUB IS AVAILABLE IN THREE CATEGORIES:

FULL MEMBERSHIP gives membership in the NORTON OWNERS CLUB with its benefits and privileges such as bi-monthly issues of ROADHOLDER MAGAZINE sent directly from England keeping members abreast of Norton owners activities from around the world, the SPARES PROGRAM that allows one to buy Norton parts directly from England at an attractive, low cost, and full voting privileges at all NOC and Branch meetings.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP is established for any Norton owner wishing to be associated with the Northern California Branch and are welcomed at all meetings, rides and other functions. Members are urged to become FULL MEMBERS as they become familiar with NOC advantages and benefits.

SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP is established for Norton enthusiasts who have not yet bought their Norton to become familiar with NOC and Branch functions and to assist them in finding a Norton suited to their needs. Although Social Members do not have Branch voting privileges, they are welcome with their ideas at all Branch functions.

FULL MEMBERSHIP: \$25.00/yr.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00/yr.

SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00/yr.

ALL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAYABLE TO THE BRANCH TREASURER. RENEWAL DUES ARE PAYABLE AT THE END OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S MEMBERSHIP YEAR, THAT MONTH BEING DESIGNATED BY THE LAST NUMBER OF THE MEMBERSHIP NUMBER LOCATED ON THE MAILING LABEL OF NORTON NOTICE. Example:

999/6

denotes member number 999 with dues expiring in JUNE.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH TOOL LOAN-OUT PROGRAM

If you need one or more of the following tools for working on your bike, get in touch with Harry Bunting and arrange to pick them up.

A refundable deposit equal to the replacement value of the tool is required at the time you pick them up.

<u>TOOL</u>	<u>DEPOSIT</u>
Timing cover oil seal guide	\$ 5.00
Rocker spindle puller	\$25.00
Crankshaft sprocket puller	\$12.00
Clutch spring tool	\$12.00
Clutch locking tool	\$18.00
Valve spring compressor	\$22.00

Harry Bunting (415) 968-2020 (home)
1401 Gilmore St. (418) 735-1550 x2394
Mountain View, Ca.

PRESIDENTIAL PROFUNDITIES

The Norton mugs from England have finally arrived, and some members picked theirs up at the last meeting in San Francisco. I plan to take them to this month's Christmas party. After that, anyone who hasn't gotten theirs will have to come to my house to pick it up. Now for confession time: I have lost my main list of people who wanted me to mail them their mugs. If, by the time you have received this issue of the NN you still haven't received your mug in the mail, and you had already paid me extra to mail it to you, please send me a reminder and I'll ship you your mug(s) immediately, if not sooner. By the way, some members at the last meeting approached me about purchasing one of the mugs. All of the mugs in this purchase are already paid for by club members who saved 50% by buying en masse. Anyone wishing to organize another club purchase at any time, feel free to contact me for the manufacturer's name and address.

Those of you interested in the early history of the Commando should check out the November issue of *Classic Bike*. One of the articles deals with the development of the first Fastback. Very interesting!!

This year's Christmas party/Hanukkah bash/Zen maintenance meeting should be a lot of fun. The club will provide liquid refreshment, ~~gay~~ festive decorations, delicious cake, etc for a merry atmosphere, and Maya Peterson and yours truly will lead the world's rowdiest, toughest, meanest motorcyclists in singing Christmas carols. Nominations for next year's club officers will also be taken, so be sure to attend and have a good time! I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ed Brooks for making his place available for us for the Christmas party. We all appreciate Ed's continuing support for our club. Maya Peterson is in charge of organizing the details of the party, so if you feel like helping out and/or bringing some food and/or drink, please contact her. Also, the club's video cassette of Peter Williams 1973 I.O.M victory will be viewed.

See you all soon!



NOVEMBER MEETING OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH OF THE N.O.C. HELD AT THE EDINBURGH CASTLE, SAN FRANCISCO, ON NOV. 11, 1982.

The meeting began at 9 p.m. with approximately forty members present. The forthcoming Christmas party/December branch meeting was discussed, and subject to the ok from Ed Brooks, it will start around 4 p.m. on Saturday, 11th December. The branch treasury should

be contributing about \$100 towards beer and some food, but members are also advised to take their own supplies and if possible to contact Maya Peterson as to what kind of food they will be taking, etc. Her home phone number is (408) 266-5905.

The members were asked to consider the upcoming elections for branch officers. Future candidates and nominations to be given at the next meeting in December.

Jan Barton told of a chance for members to go on a package holiday next year to the Isle of Man TT Races. Starting off place for the trip would be Vancouver and would be fully inclusive at \$1,100 per person return (round trip), plus the added attraction of being able to take your own motorcycle with you for an extra \$600 return.



NOVEMBER RIDE REPORT

Despite the arctic type weather of the last several weeks, eight hardcore Nortonites took part on the ride to the wine country. We pressed our way through the cold wind and fog past Vallejo and presto - good weather! We decided after traveling through some beautiful scenery and smelling the scent of wine in the air to do some tasting. The Christian Brothers winery was our first stop. Then it was off to eat very good sandwiches at a deli patio in Rutherford. Gene lead us to a couple of superb scenic winding roads where everyone let their Nortons "breathe" a bit.

Sure the ride up and back was a tough one, but because of the amount of fun I had and when I ask myself would I do it again in such weather, all I can say is "Where are my gloves?"

John Padilla

INFORMATION WANTED!

Does anybody out there have any experience with K&N air filters that fit a Commando with dual Mikuni carbs and ACK aluminum manifolds? I've been using Uni foam filters so far, but I'd like to use some K&N's if I can find some that fit good and don't interfere with the frame tubes. I've called K&N in Riverside without any luck and have their catalog, so if you have a part number or even the dimensions of some filters that work, let me know. I'll refund your postage if you write and buy you a beer the next time that I run into you if they work correctly. Reply to this news rag, care of Gene Austin or call (415) 573-9559.

PRE-OILING ENGINES

Have you ever thought about how you could minimize wear on an engine that is to be started up after completion of a rebuild? Here are some of the ways that I try to make sure that the entire engine is ready for that first kick.

On the Commando engine there are only six places that receive oil under pressure — the big ends of the connecting rods and the four valve rockers (including the ball ends of the rockers). On the pre-Commando heavy-weight twins (500cc, 600cc, 650cc, and Atlas 750), only the lower ends of the rods are fed under pressure from the oil pump. On these earlier engines the valve rockers are supplied from the scavenge (or return) side of the oil pump and not from the pressure side of the pump. What you have are engines (both types) that rely heavily on splash and drip feed, so it would be nice if your main bearings, timing gears, cam chain, camshaft and lifters, connecting rod small ends, and cylinder walls had a coating of oil before you supply ignition, fuel, and a swift kick on the kickstart lever.

Assuming that you oil the appropriate contact or bearing surfaces as you assemble the engine, you should also fill the sludge chamber in the crankshaft with fresh oil before you install the timing cover. The sludge chamber is located inside the crankshaft flywheel and has a capacity of several ounces of oil. A pump-type oil can is an easy way to fill the crankshaft oil passages and sludge trap by forcing oil into the right end of the crank. By the way, if you have the rod journals exactly half way between the top and the bottom of their travel, you can line up the oil passages in the crank with the oil spray holes in the rods (except in the very early 500 twins that don't have the oil supply holes in the rods) and end up pumping the oil through the crank and rods and depositing it within the crankcases. This is not likely to do any harm (unless you fill the crankcases with oil!) but it's of no advantage, either. By positioning the pistons or rod journals at the bottom of their travel, you'll be locating the sludge chamber below the center of the crankshaft and lessening the possibility of having the oil run out the end of the crank while you're carefully installing the timing cover.

When I have an engine that is ready to run I go through the following procedure prior to starting it. I first make sure the oil tank has sufficient oil and then remove the spark plugs and all three rocker covers. Do you remember the return oil passage that takes oil from the area of the right intake valve spring, goes down through the head, cylinder block, and crankcases, and ends up inside the timing chest? I fill the area surrounding the intake valve springs with

oil and the majority of it follows that passage and is deposited inside the timing chest to the benefit of the timing gears and cam chain. I then oil all four valve adjusting screws where they contact the ends of the valves and the edges of all four rockers where the thrust washers are. I try to squirt a little oil on the ball ends of the rockers, but this is pretty difficult. After installing the inlet rocker cap, I squirt a fair amount of oil through the exhaust rocker cap openings so that it goes down the pushrod tunnels and gives the lifters a pre-oil and possibly the camshaft, as well. A couple squirts go into each spark plug hole (not too much here or the engine will pump it back out in the final step) and the exhaust rocker covers can now go back on.

Now for the fun part. With the spark plugs still removed and fuel and ignition off, put the bike in 4th gear and push it forty or fifty feet. This allows the oil pump to begin providing oil under pressure and allows the engine to internally splash as much oil as possible. I've put oil pressure gauges on three Commando engines so far and have been surprised at how high the pressure can get (up to 30 psi) and how long the pressure remains (10-20 seconds) by using this method. I suppose the pressure is dependent upon your ability to push the bike, the gear selected (a lower gear gives more rpm), the oil viscosity, and your ability to ignore the stares and comments of your neighbors.

Install the spark plugs and plug leads and you're ready to fire it up. Providing some crisis doesn't occur after getting the engine running, you should look in your oil tank to make sure that oil is being returned from the engine by the pump. On the pre-Commando twins mentioned earlier, it is a good idea to put a fingertip over the hole in the oil return line inside the oil tank (with the engine still running), thereby forcing extra oil to go to the valve gear. If everything is O.K. up to this point, I then shut the engine off, remove the left exhaust rocker cover, start the engine again, and check that there is oil coming from the left exhaust rocker. There won't be much oil flow here at idle, but you can assume that the rest of the system is O.K. if there is oil flow here. On the other hand, the rod bearings would probably have seized by this time if there wasn't oil pressure and flow.

This may seem to be a lot of extra screwing around, but considering the cost of engine parts, I feel better knowing that I did all I could to ease the break-in wear and increase the longevity of the engine. You may choose to accomplish only some of these items, or do them in a different sequence, but I feel that preventive maintenance pays in the long run.

Gene

FEATHERBED

NEARLY GETS A BUST IN THE MOUTH ON THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO...

IN ORDER TO SUPPORT HIS CONTINUING BATTLE AGAINST THE LIKES OF THE NEFARIOUS UNNERSAL JAP MOTOR-CYCLE, OR THE EVIL "PRINCE OF DARKNESS" (JOS. LUCAS), THE LONE NORTON HAS BEEN FORCED WEEKLY TO DON THE DISGUISE OF A RESPECTABLE SAN FRANCISCO EXECUTIVE.

AFTER A HARD DAY AT THE OFFICE, OUR HERO PREPARES TO MOUNT HIS STEED...

SEEMS LIKE THE ONLY WOMEN I'VE BEEN ABLE TO MEET AROUND HERE WEAR 3-PIECE SUITS AND HANG OUT AT FERN BARS

WHY AREN'T THERE ANY CLEAN LIVING FEMALE BIKERS AROUND?

JEEZUS! LOOK AT WHAT JUST PULLED UP!

MIMM

BWAH!!

HI, FELLOW NORTON RIDER! I'M NANCY NORTON. THIS LEATHER MAKES ME SO HOT AFTER A GOOD HARD RIDE!

ZIP!

(WOW) UH-H-H, WHAT SATISFIES YOU BEST? A LONG STROKE OR A SHORT ONE?

I DETECT A DOUBLE MEANING IN THAT! FOR YOU, TURKEY, I'M THE

The Unapproachable
NORTON

RUTTER '82

COMMANDO TASK FORCE

"Isolastic mounting", say the Commando Service Notes published by the Norton Owners Club, "was developed as a way of producing a lighter, smoother motorcycle by spending as little as possible on research and development."

The booklet continues: "Once the development had reached a stage where the system worked it was put into production, and from 1968 to the electric start models we have all been stuck with an under-engineered system. . . The problem is further complicated by the strangeness of the system—the average dealer still does not know how it works—and the feeble way in which it was constructed. A .010in clearance has to be maintained in an assembly of unplated steel washers and two bits of soft plastic situated directly behind the front wheel, and covered with loose-fitting plastic tube, so that the rain and grit which gets in cannot get out again."

Oh, how scathing we can be when armed with the benefit of hindsight! When the 750cc Norton Commando was sprung on an unsuspecting public at the 1967 Earls Court show, it was hailed as the saviour (yet another one) of the British bike industry. With a top speed of 120mph and a standing quarter time as low as 12.8 seconds in practised hands, the Commando was as fast as any motorcycle being made at that time. And although it was a long-stroke vertical twin, with a whopping 89mm piston travel, it DIDN'T VIBRATE! To be more accurate, it shook as merrily as any other unbalanced big-bore parallel twin, but the ingenious Isolastic rubber-mounting system prevented the trembles from reaching the rider.

The first production Commandos reached customers in April 1968, and the bike's speed, handling, good looks and uncanny smoothness evoked a glowing response. Remember that the Triumph Bonneville and the BSA Lightning were then the most advanced motorcycles the British were selling; the Triumph Trident and BSA Rocket triples did not appear until later in 1968, and the 750cc Honda four was merely an ugly rumour that few people in Europe took seriously.

"Is this the instant classic?" trilled the American magazine *Cycle World*. Its test Commando was the second fastest machine it had ever thrashed through the standing quarter, the time of 13.47 seconds being bettered only by a Dunstall Norton. *Cycle World* intoned: "Certain fabled machines, such as the Vincent and the Ariel Square Four, have earned places high in the list of all-time great motorcycles. No one would be surprised if the Commando acquires a reputation that will allow it to join that select band."

What happened to turn that paean of praise,

written in 1968, into the bitter comments offered in the Commando Service Notes, penned in the mid-seventies? Lack of product development, the bugbear of many British bikes, was the culprit. With the passing of miles Commando riders found that their shimmed Isolastics were difficult to adjust and lubricate, the swinging arm spindle was weakly located in the gearbox cradle by a 1/4 in. screw, the frame and centre stand broke, an inadequate layshaft bearing caused gearbox failures, and alternator magnets worked loose, among other troubles.

It would be convenient to lambast the Commando's design team for these shortcomings, but not entirely just. For the fact is that the Commando concept was stitched together in a remarkable dozen weeks in the summer of 1967 by engineers and stylists who were starved of funds and forced to work with decades-old components. The Commando epitomised the Great British Compromise. But if the bike was a lash-up, it was certainly an inspired bitsa.

The project's chief designer, Bernard Hooper, was strapped for facilities because Norton, as part of the Plumstead-based AMC group, had just been rescued from collapse by Dennis Poore's Manganese Bronze empire, which owned the Villiers engine company in Wolverhampton. Shortly after the takeover in 1966 Poore summoned executives from both camps to a round-table conference in his office and asked them to toss around ideas for a replacement for the ageing 750cc Atlas, which had been around since 1961. A new bike was needed to revive Norton's image—but it had to be available quickly and cheaply because of the shortage of cash.

It was decided to resurrect a five-year-old design for a dohc parallel twin with unit-construction five-speed gearbox. This attractive-sounding power source had been laid out about five years previously by Charles Udall, who gained renown with Velocette before moving to AMC. Hooper's team was charged with modernising the cylinder head of the P10, as the bike was termed, but found it hard to muster enthusiasm for the task.

Development engineer Bob Trigg remembers: "The camshafts were driven by a huge length of chain—about three feet of it. This could have given terrible trouble in service. The engine also vibrated, as you would expect, and I felt it would probably leak oil."

Work on the P10 halted when it became obvious that the bike could not possibly be completed in time for the '67 Earls Court show. And in any case, Wally Wyatt, one of the Plumstead-based engineers, had managed to extract from a modified Atlas engine more power than the P10 was capable of giving.

Only 11 weeks remained to the show when the P10 was finally abandoned and all efforts were switched to an Atlas-powered machine. Yet Dr. Stefan Bauer, Norton Villier's director of engineering who had previously worked with Rolls-Royce and in the nuclear industry, insisted that the new Norton should not vibrate and must have a modern structure for a frame. He didn't want an old-fashioned collection of tubes, even if it was graced with the Featherbed name.

How could these demands be reconciled with the vibration-prone Atlas engine, which had been stretched from the 1947 500cc Dominator engine? Bernard Hooper provided a tentative answer during discussions at Plumstead: hang the engine, gearbox and the rear swinging arm on rubber bushes. This would soak up the shakes and void any tendency for the final drive sprockets to twist out of line.

Hooper and Trigg talked over the idea on the train ride back to their base at Wolverhampton, and realised that it could work. Trigg began to prepare drawings, and also sketched out a backbone-type frame proposed by Bauer and Hooper. This was based on a 2.25in diameter spine, which carried a triangulated rear section and twin front downtubes. The finished frame weighed 24lb, nearly a third lighter than the famous Featherbed unit.

The Isolastic theory was a success in practice. Norton called in a leading rubber company for assistance, but were told that what they proposed would take two years to develop. With only weeks available, the Wolverhampton team had to tackle the job themselves, making initial experiments with very large bushes. These reduced the vibration level hardly at all, but a softer grade of rubber was found to banish the shudders above 5,000rpm. Bauer suggested cutting the bushes in half, which gave smooth running above 3,500rpm, and a further reduction in size finally contained vibration below 1,800rpm.

"Riding a Commando was like flying an aeroplane," Trigg remembers. Wild, rose-tinted exaggeration? Not a bit; compared to the singles and twins then on the market, the Commando was an astonishing, almost eerie experience. At tickover the fuel tank and exhaust pipes juddered and the front wheel jogged gently up and down. But vibration disappeared as the revs rose, and the Commando soared along like a turbine. I have good reason to recall this deceptive sensation --it cost me money when I got fined for innocently riding at 60mph in a 40 zone on one of the early models!

The vibration bogey had been beaten, but there was still the urgent need to liven up the Commando's ancient components with fresh styling. Wolf Ohlins, an advertising agency with no previous experience in motor-cycling, was called in and offered a

surprisingly useful contribution. "Some of their suggestions made us laugh, but other ideas were good," Hooper says. One of the agency's contributions was the distinctive ears at the front of the seat on the first Commando. Too short to be effective as kneegrips, they were nevertheless part of a group of features that made the Commando stand out from other vertical twins of the day.

Visitors to the 1967 Earls Court exhibition will almost certainly recall the Commando displayed—it had a silver frame, tank and cylinder barrels, an orange seat and a large green globe on each side of the tank. The globe had been devised by the Wolf Ohlins advisers as Norton Villier's new corporate image, and to this day it survives on the company's spares packaging.

But beneath the show bike's gimmicky colours was truly elegant styling. The base of the glass-fibre fuel tank, seat and tail unit ran in a single straight line from front to rear, a horizontal theme repeated by the low-level silencers. The Atlas engine was canted forward at an angle matched by the front mudguard stays, frame downtubes, forward edge of the side panels and the rear suspension units. The handlebars were traditional British flats, and ahead of them jutted a chromed speedometer, rev counter and headlamp shell. An aluminium front mudguard was fitted and the single-bolt primary chaincase was highly polished. Distinctive forged-alloy plates carried the footrests.

In production the impractical garish colours were changed to a black frame and seat, and a green tank and tail unit. The Fastback, as the first Commando was called, was arguably the best looking Commando ever made, and an outstanding machine by the standards of the last sixties.

Modifications including the use of 8.9:1 pistons had raised power output to nearly 60bhp at 6,500rpm compared to the Atlas's 49bhp. A triplex primary chain replaced the single-row chain, and a new diaphragm clutch required only light pressure at the handlebar lever. Weighed with its 3.25-gallon tank half full, the Fastback scaled just 430lb. This modest bulk allied to the Atlas motor's mid-range poke produced those rapid standing-quarter times and a 0-60mph acceleration rate of around five seconds.

The Commando earned a £1,000 Control award for the 'best contribution of motorcycle safety, comfort and performance'. For five years from 1968 to 1972 it won the Motor Cycle News Machine of the Year contest which, if nothing else, proved that it exerted a strong pull on the minds of 14-year-olds literate enough to fill in a coupon.

Unfortunately, those who actually rode Commandos had to wait until 1975 before the

unsatisfactory shim adjustment on the Isolastics was changed to a vernier arrangement. Incredibly, the vernier adjustment had been specified in the original 1967 patent for the Isolastic system. But in tests on prototype machines in 1968 the cheaper shims appeared to work well and were included on the production bikes.

As a hasty compromise, the original Commando Fastback incorporated some clever thinking. But once production got under way and the model proved popular, the inevitable problems that were bound to occur with a rapidly developed machine were not rectified quickly enough. Inertia, another nasty habit in British motorcycle factories, had set in and left a stain on the Commando's reputation.

(Reprinted from the November issue of Classic Bike Magazine.)

REPLACEMENT ROCKER OIL FEED LINE

Remember the last time when:

1. You were riding your favorite stretch of twisty-curvy, one turn leaning into the next with the grace and control of a ballet master.
 2. You were all the way over in a long, smooth sweeper, the headlight of that SECA or GPz you'd just passed getting rapidly smaller in your mirrors.....
 3. You were hundreds of miles away from home with your favorite passenger and the end of your vacation was so far away that you couldn't image being back at work.....
- Keep all this in mind as you read what follows.

A funny thing happened on the way to the rafting trip last May. There we were, riding down the freeway, headed for the overnighter in Lotus on the American River. There were about seven bikes, all riding more or less together. We were about thirty minutes from our turn-off when my right leg began to feel warmer than my left. No problem, I thought to myself, it's just that crosswind blowing heat from the engine onto my leg. But, as we all know, our Nortons occasionally act like small children, throwing tantrums, wetting the bed (or the garage floor as the case may be) and displaying other willful and unruly behavior. With this in mind, (my Norton is a headstrong two year old), I looked down to make sure that there was nothing wrong.

Before I go into all the black and slippery details, let me digress for a moment and comment on the parentage of Norton's design engineers. If you get out your "Commando Workshop Manual" (you DO have one, don't you??) and look at section C21, you'll find the following sentence: "The oil pump delivers lubricant under pressure to the oil pressure relief valve and a bleed off the main feed supplies lubricant to the rocker gear." That's the only mention given to a unique component of your Commando, the rocker feed

oil line. You know the one I mean, that length of fragile British that hangs off the right side of your engine, naked and exposed for all to see.

Norton's design engineers, in their wisdom, left that vital oil supply to be delivered by an external pipe rather than integrating a passageway inside the engine to the rockers. Then, to compound their error, they specified that this pipe be made of plastic (which becomes even more fragile after being subjected to the heat and vibration of a few thousand miles). Come on guys, you could've done better than that!

But, enough of that and back to my story. You've probably already guessed what I saw when I looked down at the engine on my bike. The rocker feed oil line had a small crack in it and was gleefully spraying my right boot, leg and the whole right side of the bike with a nasty-looking black fluid. (Had it really been that long since I'd changed the oil?) Anyway, due to the kind and generous help of John Padilla (with his pick-up truck) and Phil Radford (who helped by donating a spare rocker feed line, even though he was immediately behind me when mine failed and so was covered with small spots from the oil that had sprayed off my bike), I reached the campground at Lotus and repaired the bike without much problem. I learned, when refilling the engine oil, that almost two quarts had sprayed out in 10-15 seconds.

After I had the bike fixed, I began to fully realize just how lucky I'd been. Because of John's pick-up, I had only a fifteen minute delay on the side of the freeway. And then there was Phil, who, even though he'd been well splattered with oil, cheerfully gave me his spare oil line. I pictured how it would have come out if I'd been in the situations at the beginning of this article.

- Situation 1. The oil soaks the rear tire in a turn and I slide stylishly into the underbrush.
- Situation 2. I get the bike stopped only to have the SECA/GPz rider somewhat patronizingly offer a ride to the nearest phone. (OH, my pride!)
- Situation 3. A great vacation turns into a big hassle and the passenger rides off into the sunset on the back of a Honda Interstate after telling me to forget her phone number. (Not adventurous enough, I guess.)

What's that you say? Is there a point to all of this rambling? Indeed there is. It is to let you know about a solution to the great oil feed line problem. There is a source for a braided steel replacement for the wonderful piece of British plastic. The source's name is Dan Solt and his address is given below.

For anyone who is interested, here are some

details on the oil lines that are available:

- 1) Cost: Depends on the number of lines ordered. When I ordered mine, (as part of an order of four), it was approximately \$18.50 each, including postage.
- 2) Delivery time: Approximately 1 1/2 - 2 weeks.
- 3) Quality: The quality of the samples I've seen (including my own) is very high.
- 4) Temperature range and burst pressure: To approximately 500° F and 750 psi, respectively.
- 5) Modifications required: Only that an extra copper (or aluminum) washer be added at each mounting point to keep the line (which is of larger diameter) from rubbing on the engine. Adding the extra (new) washers on my bike caused no oil seepage problem.

Dan needs the following to supply you with the new line:

- 1) \$\$\$\$
- 2) A set of three banjos to attach the new line to.
- 3) Your specification for the line. (They are available with or without a "T-fitting" for an oil pressure gauge.)

It would be worthwhile to try to put a group order together for anyone who is interested, thus reducing the cost for each line. Also, I've found Dan to be very friendly, helpful and trustworthy. (He is, after all, a Norton person himself.)

Dan's address is: Dan Solt
3467 Paint Trail
Ft. Worth, Texas 76116

P.S. For anyone who has an oil line break, I'm carrying a spare plastic one all the time. But I just might not be able to refrain from saying, "I told you so"...

Tom Boman
6170 W. Walbrook
San Jose, Ca. 95129

LEAKY TACH DRIVE?

I will machine your tach drive housing and replace the original O-ring with a proper chevron type seal for \$7.50. I have a spare housing already modified, so I can swap housings with you at a club meeting. For those of you who think that your tach drive leak will cure itself, I'll give you a cup of used engine oil to put on your left boot so that you'll have a matching pair of boots!

Mark Gribble (415) 573-1699 eve.

Junk is something you keep for ten years and then throw out two weeks before you need it.

Art Sirota

FOR SALE

N.O.C. paraphernalia as follows:

- 3" square machine badge.....\$6.00
- lapel pin..... 1.25
- 4 1/2" sticker..... 1.00
- 2" sticker..... .50
- key fob with club badge..... 1.50

3-color Northern California Branch
lapel pin..... 1.50

Northern California Branch T-shirts (white shirts with blue and red logo as below) in large and medium sizes only. \$7.50 each, plus a dollar if you want it mailed.



Contact Carolyn Scott (phone (415) 968-5117) at 1970 Latham #14, Mountain View, Ca. 94040 to order by mail. Please send extra money to cover postage, and be reasonable. If you want your items thrown in a thin envelope so that the U.S. Postal Service can do a number on them, send only 20¢ extra. If you want a cushioned envelope like the Post Office sells, you'll have to send about a dollar to cover the cost of it and the postage.

TRADING POST

NORTON-RELATED ADS RUN FOR TWO MONTHS, UNLESS RESUBMITTED.

WANT TO TRADE:

850 "flame ring" head gasket in exchange for a 750 "flame ring" head gasket. Or will sell the 850 gasket for \$0.

Gene Austin (415) 573-9559 evenings

FOR SALE:

1. International oil tank for plunger frame, perfect.
2. Two model 88 motors in pieces, plus extra parts.
3. The following slimline parts: gas tanks, oil tanks, tool boxes, primary cases, triple clamps, fork sliders, wheels, engine sprockets, clutches, gearbox, and fenders.
4. '71 Dunstall Commando. New motor, excellent condition. \$1,300.

All of the above are negotiable and tradable. I have enough parts to build a complete Atlas or Domi 88.

Mike Rettie (415) 658-6181

FOR SALE:

Black MKIII Roadster tank, side covers, and seat in good original condition.

Bob Marshall (415) 851-1277, leave message please

FOR SALE:

1. Black '72 Commando. Excellent condition, stock, no rust or dents, complete and mechanically perfect. \$1,750
2. Silver & black '62 E52 (500cc single). Mechanically and cosmetically excellent. Has slimline featherbed frame and Roadholder forks. \$2,150.
3. '58 Dominator 99 (600cc twin). Color is factory red (one of 900 delivered in this color) with wideline featherbed frame and Roadholder forks. Excellent condition, has some extra chrome, twin port SS head, magneto ignition, and 12 volt electrics with alternator. \$2,800.
4. '47 BSA YA7 Golden Flash (500cc twin). Excellent condition, original and stock except for some extra chrome. Mechanically excellent, new motor and total rebuild on the rest. \$2,350.
5. Black '70 Velocette MSS (500cc single). Super condition, low miles, no rust or dents, and mechanically excellent. \$2,750.

All these bikes are roadworthy and in superb shape. Although they are not currently licensed, they have all legal documents. The prices are negotiable and I have a considerable stock of parts for sale as well. The parts are mainly BSA A10 and Goldstar.

Bob Hughes home, (206) 789-1904
Seattle, Wash. work, (206) 782-8879

FOR SALE:

'56 Dominator 99 (600cc twin with pre-AMC gearbox, DC generator, and magneto ignition) in midst of restoration. Disassembled, but engine, gearbox, wheels (with new tires installed), and brakes are complete with no expense spared. Many new parts included and this is not your usual "basket case". Includes parts manual and workshop manual. Call for more information. \$600 (a dollar per cc).

Gene Austin (415) 573-9559 evenings

FOR SALE:

1. Fiberglass Roadster petrol tank and sidecover setup with quarter fairing. Newly painted in black with red pinstripes and lettering. Offers around \$175.
2. Metal Roadster petrol tank and sidecover setup. Newly painted in white with blue pinstripes and lettering. Offers around \$150.

Scott Marburger (415) 455-8776 eves.

FOR SALE:

1. Transmission gears, \$17 each.
2. Lucas RITA ignition, less rotor, \$35.
3. Front disc conversion (disc, wheel, master cylinder, caliper, and disc slider), \$175.
4. Brand new pattern Manx seat, \$40.
5. Commando inner primary case (pre-MKIII), \$30.
6. Commando connecting rods, excellent, \$30 each.
7. New 850 +.020" piston set, \$55.
8. Commando clutch basket, \$15.
9. T15 brake backing plate, \$20.
10. Grab rail with clamps, perfect, \$20.
11. Oil pump, \$40.
12. Atlas seat, original cover, \$40.
13. Roadster seat with new upholstery, \$40.
14. Brand new pair of Atlas mufflers, \$115.
15. Complete pre-MKIII rearsets, some rust and dents, 35.
16. Set of blue metal Roadster side covers, \$25.
17. MKIII rear wheel, no sprocket, \$20.
18. Disc type front wheel without disc, perfect, \$20.
19. Cush drive rear wheel, perfect, \$20.
20. Interstate tank and seat, very good, \$165.
21. Pair of black straight through reverse cone megaphones (loud!), \$20.
22. Stock valves, \$7 each.
23. Set of MKIII vernier adjustable isolastics, \$35.
24. Stock mirror, \$10.
25. Alternator stators, \$30 each.
26. Hardened Commando clutch hub, \$25.
27. P-11 engine, less head, \$90.
28. Lucas twin lead magneto, excellent, \$65.
29. Brand new 33 piece forged and polished 1/2" drive socket set, \$100 new, \$40.
30. New 10 piece screwdriver set, \$8.
31. Chrome oil tank for P-11 or N-15, \$15.
32. Commando horn, \$8.
33. Set of those expensive Lucas turn signals, \$55.
34. Four gallon alloy Commando gas tank, \$75.
35. New 4 1/2 gallon slimline alloy gas tank, \$75.
36. Excellent 750 head, \$98.
37. MKIII primary case (inner and outer), excellent, \$35.
38. Cyclegard alarm, mounts on license plate holder, \$10.
39. Atlas engine, complete and running, \$105.
40. "S" model central oil tank, \$20.
41. Red Atlas gas tank, excellent, no dents, \$65.
42. Original factory 750 or 850 shop manual, \$18.
43. Every other part you could imagine for your Norton at ridiculously low prices.

Ya ain't never gonna see Norton parts this cheap agin, so git off yer duff an' give me a call between 6 & 9 P.M. (so's not to P.O. the ol' lady) an' stock up on stuff you know yer gonna need!

Harvey (408) 255-7356 6-9 P.M.

FOR SALE:

1. Slightly used Lucas RITA to fit BSA single. Can be easily adapted to Commando or Atlas with battery and coil ignition. Has the same ignition unit as the Commando kit. \$100
2. Used pre-71 Commando headlight dimmer/Flasher/horn switch and harness assembly, \$15.
3. Used Atlas front wheel and SLS brake assembly, complete, \$25.
4. Used Atlas rear wheel and brake assembly, complete, \$25.
5. Used chrome Dunlop WM2-19 rim in good condition, \$10.
6. Used front Commando isolastic assembly, \$10.
7. Two used pre-MKIII Commando engine cradles, \$25 each.
8. Used 750 Commando swing arm, \$30.
9. Pair of black 145 lb./in. Girling springs, \$10.
10. Two 12 volt Lucas coils from late Atlas or 650 (coils made 6/67), \$5 each.
11. Pair of new aluminum Commando fork top nuts (they hold the instruments on), \$7.50.
12. Commando Roadster grab rail (not the same as the ones on Interstates) in perfect condition with all hardware, \$15.
13. New Commando 20 tooth countershaft sprocket, \$20.
14. New 21 tooth sprocket as above, \$20.
15. New late-style fuel line assembly for Commandos with Amal carbs, \$10.
16. Complete 850 MKIII head steady and spring assembly, \$25. Will consider trade-in of earlier box section head steady.
17. Used mainshafts for pre-Commando AMC gearboxes, in excellent condition, \$10 ea.
18. Steel one-piece manifold to fit dual Mikunis to Commando, painted black, \$15.

Gene Austin (415) 573-9559 evenings

FOR SALE:

'72 Commando with '69 Fastback fiberglass, Quaife 5 speed gearbox, much engine work, alloy rims, and many spares. 4,000 miles on fresh engine. \$1,875.

Michael Hersh (408) 338-4021

FOR SALE:

1975 850 Norton MKIII Roadster, white with red and blue stripes. Boyer electronic ignition, white quarter fairing, Dunstall mufflers, 15,000 miles, excellent condition. \$1,600.

Jim Korte (415) 386-7628

FOR SALE:

Rebuilt Commando gearbox. \$150.

David Crader (408) 446-1466 days
(408) 295-4968 eves.

FOR SALE:

'72 Dunstall Norton. Has fairing, fiberglass tank, seat, and front fender, dual discs, Dunstall exhaust, and 3-speed transmission. Asking \$1,800.

Jim Zell (415) 868-0561

FOR SALE:

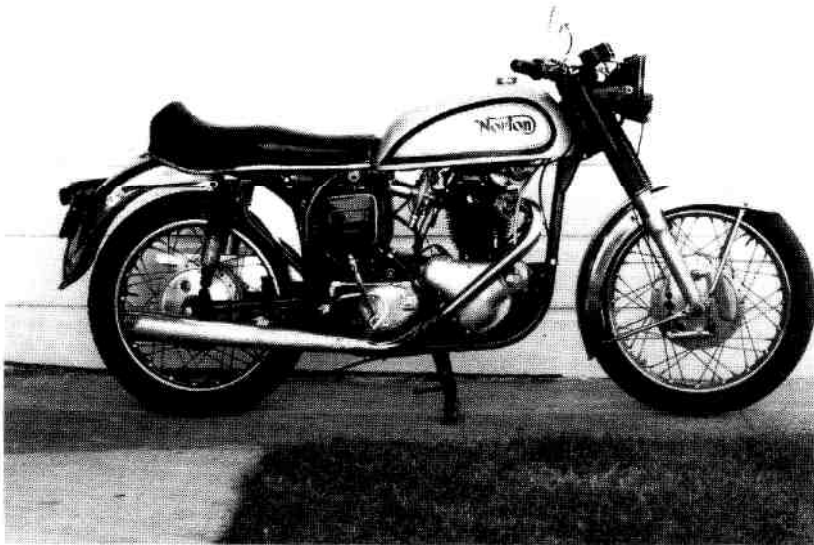
Very rare 4-piece sheetmetal rear enclosure set for slimline featherbed frames. Throw away that rear fender and turn your Norton into a Deluxe! No dents, with original factory two-tone paint—but it needs repainting. \$200.

Art Sirota (415) 747-0740

FOR SALE:

1. 1964 650cc Triumph replica TT Special, completely rebuilt, new everything, cherry, \$1,500.
2. Triumph stock dual seat, recovered, \$55.
3. 850 Commando frame, November '73 #310370, \$200.
4. 850cc Commando engine, complete, standard bore, #310370, \$295.
5. 850 complete front end. Disc, wheel, forks sliders, master cylinder, hose and spindle, the lot, \$250.
6. 850 top and bottom triple clamps, (yokes), \$40.
7. 850 wiring harness, complete, \$40.
8. 850 swinging arm, \$40.
9. 850 headsteady, \$20.
10. 850 stainless rear fender, \$25.
11. 850 stainless front fender with stays, \$25.
12. 850 rear light unit complete with indicators, \$30.
13. 850 header pipes with balance pipe, fair condition, \$25.
14. 850 oil tank, \$30.
15. 850 gearbox cradle, \$20.
16. 850 rear chain guard, \$25.
17. 850 battery carrier, \$10.
18. 850 speedo and tach holders, black, \$10.
19. Commando air cleaner cases, \$10.
20. Left and right footrest brackets, \$10.
21. Commando front engine mounting with isolastics, \$10.
22. Early 750 Commando front fender, chrome, \$15.
23. Hi-rider gas tank, \$40.
24. Fastback center stand, \$20.
25. 750 Commando swinging arm, \$25.
26. 750 headsteady, \$10.
27. 750 center stand, \$25.
28. Commando engine sprocket pullers, brand new, made them myself, \$10.
29. Black leather motorcycle jacket, size 40 in chest, hardly worn, \$75.

Phil Radford (408) 293-4548



THIS MONTH'S FEATURE BIKE IS A '65 650 SPORT SPECIAL WITH DUNSTALL REARSETS AND SWEEPBACK PIPES WITH DUNSTALL SILENCERS. OTHER FEATURES ON THIS PARTICULAR MACHINE ARE TWIN MONOBLUC APALS WITH A COMMON FLUAT BOWL, VELOCITY STACKS ON THE CARBS, TFS FRONT BRAKE, AND MAGNETO IGNITION.

