

Norton Notice

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH



One of the most colourful characters of them all, Dave Crawford stuck with Nortons right to the end.



NO. 72

MAY 1984

Norton Notice

The Newsletter of The Northern California Branch



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.

NORTON NOTICE is a reflection of its readership who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, 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, The Notice affords an excellent opportunity to share experiences and information with the membership at large, and to bring the Branch members closer together. Deadline for items to be submitted to this publication is the 21st of each month.

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

FULL MEMBERSHIP \$25.00 per year.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP \$10.00 per year.

SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP \$10.00 per year.
 (OVERSEAS ASSOCIATE OR SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE U.S. \$20.00 per year.)

ALL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAYABLE TO THE BRANCH TREASURER. RENEWAL DUES ARE PAYABLE AT THE END OF THE INDIVIDUALS MEMBERSHIP YEAR, THAT MONTH BEING DESIGNATED BY THE LAST NUMBER OF THE MEMBERSHIP NUMBER LOCATED ON THE MAILING LABEL OF THE NOTICE. FOR EXAMPLE:

828/2

DENOTES MEMBER NUMBER 828 WITH HIS DUES EXPIRING ON THE 1ST OF FEBRUARY. PLEASE SEND ALL CHANGES OF ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY/TREASURER ONLY.

FULL MEMBERSHIP give 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 informed of Norton owners activities all around the world. Use of a low-cost Spares Program which allows one to buy Norton Spares directly from England at significant savings, 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 welcome at all meetings, rides and other functions. Members are urged to become Full Members once they become familiar with the NOC benefits.

SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP is established for Norton enthusiasts who have not as yet bought a Norton motorcycle but would like to be included in club functions. They do not have Branch voting rights.



UPCOMING BRANCH EVENTS

May 10	7:30 P.M.	Rich's Swiss Chalet 4085 El Camino Way Palo Alto	May meeting
May 12 & 13	daily	Vacaville gliderport Vacaville	European M/C Assoc. rally
May 20	10 A.M. - 5 P.M.	Dublin, Ca.	N.O.C. swap meet and bike display
June 2 & 3	9:00 A.M.	Brooks Cyclery 1615 Almaden Rd. San Jose	Morro Bay overniter
June 14	7:30 P.M.	Edinburgh Castle 950 Geary St. San Francisco	June meeting
June 24	noon	Horseshoe picnic area (off Skyline Blvd.) Joaquin Miller Park Oakland	N.O.C. picnic

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 oil and gasoline by the scheduled departure time and all personal problems should be taken care of. In other words....
FULL TANKS AND EMPTY BLADDERS!

CLUB RIDES

There won't be an organized club ride in May due to the number of conflicting events this month. May 6 is (or was) the date of the San Jose Mile races, and the European Motorcycle Association swap and show will be at the Vacaville gliderport on May 12 and 13. Because the DMA is willing the event as a "combined European and antique motorcycle swap and show" to replace the CAMA rally, I suspect that most of us would like to check it out rather than go on an organized club ride. Our own branch swap and display will be the following Sunday, May 20, in Dublin and the last weekend of the month is Memorial Day weekend.

However, sports fans, the Morro Bay over-nighter is the first weekend in June. I have four campsites, with a capacity of twenty-four people, reserved at Morro Bay State Park. On Saturday, June 2, we'll take backroads as much as possible (Carmel Valley Road from Monterey, Nacimiento-Ferguson Road through Fort Hunter Liggett, and south along the newly-opened section of Highway 1 to the campground) and return to the Bay Area on Highway 1 through Big Sur on Sunday. We'll leave Brooks Cyclery at 9:15 A.M. with no gas stops until the Monterey area, so please check your oil, tire pressures, and so forth before 9:15 A.M. I'd like to get to Morro Bay in time to set up camp and go for a short joint ride with the members of the Southern California Norton Owners Club before dark. Give me a call at (415) 471-0450 (9 A.M.-2 P.M. weekdays, or any time weekends) if you would like to intercept the group along the way south.

Gene Austin

Membership Secretaries Wafflings

Welcome to the club the following new members.

Richard Weil of San Francisco, CA
Robert Reynolds of Birmingham, Alabama
Peter Christiansen of Sausalito, CA
Robert Hemmerly of USS Carl Vinson, San Francisco, CA
Heather Lamb of Berkeley, CA
Bruce Carlidge of Menlo Park, CA
Thomas Mikkelsen of Albany, CA
Susan Meissner of Santa Cruz, CA
Nicholas Wiltz of San Jose, CA
Paul Toarmino of Avon, New York
Arthur Green of Sacramento, CA
Ted Greim of Shingle Springs, CA
Steven Ruse of San Francisco, CA

I omitted to add in last month's ramblings that item CL7-4B (page9) Girling Gas Shocks should be crossed out of the new Fair Spares parts list. Sue Emery wrote to me asking me to do this before I mailed them out but I forgot. Anyway they are unobtainable at the moment from Fair Spares. Also anyone ordering from them should tell them to send what they have in stock STRAIGHT AWAY and to send either a credit note for what is not in stock or to send the ordered parts when they get them in. This way any delay in receiving parts is cut to a minimum. If any member is experiencing long delays for parts from Fair Spares or is having any kinds of problems ordering, either give me a call or drop me a line and I'll look into it for you.

All copies of the NOC calendar that I ordered extra from England have now been sold. So please no more enquiries or orders for them. The weekend prior to our own Swap Meet in Dublin May 20th, there will be another Swap Meet and show arranged by the Vacaville Gliderport May 12th & 13th. So you now have two chances within a week to either sell those underpriced Norton parts or buy those hard to get overpriced parts for your Norton.

Phil Radford

TWISTIES

Not a lot to say this month (at least not in this column). I'll just remind everyone of our swap meet on May 20 and mention that the European Motorcycle Association has agreed to hold a CAMA type rally in conjunction with their annual swap meet. The date is May 12 and 13 at Vacaville Glider Port. That currently conflicts with our Morrow Bay overnighter, but we have moved the trip to a later date (look for details later in the Notice).

The Annual Rider's Picnic (formerly the beer bust) is scheduled for June 24 and will be held in the Horse Shoe picnic area of Sequoia Park on Skyline Blvd. on the EAST side of the bay in the Oakland Hills. There will be food and of course beer, and hopefully lots of neat Nortons to look at.

I won't be making the Isle of Mann trip this year (a Prody Racer ate my cash) but I do plan to do it next year, same way. I saw a U-Haul pick up truck the other day so I expect that is the answer to how to get to Vancouver. I'll still want some company, give me a call if you're interested and start saving your pennies.

I've been keeping an eye on some of the British Bike publications and have come up with some interesting articles for sale. In the interest of keeping this from becoming a market place, I'll just mention the generals here, give me a call to get the particulars. First there's a company that offers 1/9 and 1/12 scale models of Manx and Commando Nortons (this last one is a Production Racer) for about \$20. There's another firm that offers scale repros of Manx engines. Last, multi color line drawings and actual photos of classic British iron are being offered in 18" x 24" formats suitable for framing. I'd like to get group orders for this stuff to help keep the cost down.

Judging from everyone's response the 1984 NUC calendars were well recieved. There were some nice bikes in there, but I think the branch could give another NUC a run for their money with the machines we have in the area. I'm going to check on printing prices and come up with the cost for producing such a calendar, what I need from you is nominations of bikes you'd like to see in the calendar. Also I'd like input on format, how much you'd pay, and how many you'd buy.

NORTON RACE MANUAL

Norton Notice Editor,

I've been racing at Willow Springs race track and winning a few. Anyway, I've compiled and written a Norton race manual covering crank lightening and rebalancing, valve train lightening, porting, cam timing, altering compression ratios, bullet-proofing, etc., etc. Twenty-three typed pages and eight pages of illustrations. The manual was a lot of work and should be very helpful to those hopping up their Nortons. Please pass this on to your readers of Norton Notice as there could be someone out there desperate for this info. The cost is \$10.00.

Jim Schmidt
582 N. Golflinks Rd.
Fresno, Ca. 93727

TECH TIP UPDATES

It looks like a rebuttal to another of Art Siantala's excellent "tech tips" is in order. His subject last month was speedometer drive gearboxes, in which he said "broken drives are not repairable". They certainly are repairable and even rebuildable if you can get enough new or good used parts. I've rebuilt several speedo drives, including the one on my Commando which has over 34,000 miles on it since I rebuilt it. Les Emery, of Fair Spares fame, also rebuilds speedo drives on an exchange basis for \$22.00 if you want to save some money over the cost of a new unit. If any of you out there have any broken speedo drives that you can't use, in any condition, I'll gladly take them off your hands. I'll even pay shipping if you want to mail them to me (no bricks please, Art!). I'll accept either Commando or pre-Commando units—or for that matter, any Smiths unit for any motorcycle.

In answer to the question in my safety-wiring tech tip in last month's NN regarding the locations of left-hand threads on '68-'74 Commandos, how about the following answers:

1. crankshaft timing pinion nut (part # NM24732 or 067889), all models.
2. rear wheel R/H bearing lockring (part # 060317), all models.
3. drum brake tie rod and clavis, on one end of tie rod of front drum brake models only.

The front wheel bearing lockring (part # 060363) on the left side of the hub is stated as having left-hand threads in some of the factory shop manuals, but it actually is right-hand thread. Interestingly enough, all of the after-market shop manuals that I have, such as the Haynes and Chilton manuals, don't make that mistake.

Gene Austin

BRANCH PROPERTY

If any of this branch's past officers, or anyone else, has any club materials or property, please give them to any of the present branch officers so that we can keep better track of it. This applies to banners, posters, stationery, stamps, or anything else that belongs to the branch as a whole.



MAY 7th 1984

DEAR CLUB MEMBER,

LAST FRIDAY A VERY SAD DAVE KERST CALLED ME TO SAY THAT R&J SALES HAD MOVED THEIR BUSINESS ABOUT 3WEEKS AGO FROM DUBLIN TO PLEASANTON WITHOUT EVEN BOTHERING TO INFORM HIM.

SO UNFORTUNATELY THE SWAP-MEET WE HAD PLANNED FOR MAY 20th WILL HAVE TO BE CANCELLED. AS OF TODAY NO ALTERNATIVE SITE HAS BEEN FOUND.

COULD YOU PLEASE PASS ON THIS INFORMATION ON TO OTHER PEOPLE YOU KNOW WHO WOULD BE MAKING THE TRIP TO THE SWAP-MEET THAT DO NOT RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER.

WE DO HOPE HOWEVER TO RE-SCHEDULE THIS EVENT TO A FUTURE DATE WHEN A SUITABLE VENUE HAS BEEN FOUND.

MANY THANKS DAVE FOR ALL THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE SO FAR IN ORGANISING THIS SWAP-MEET DONT DESPAIR.

YOURS

PHIL RADFORD

tuning up

Dealing with dealers

One of my less desirable traits is that I'm an impulse buyer. It's something I've been trying unsuccessfully to correct for some time now. Last weekend, for instance, I scanned the newspaper ads while agonizing over the idea of replacing our television set—the one that takes 20 minutes to produce a picture, then works just swell until the climactic scene of a show, when the volume goes south and the 19-inch picture shrinks to 12 before the unblinking eye ultimately takes a long siesta.

After finally deciding that we could better afford a \$180 television sometime after the bills from the Daytona trip came rolling in, we decided instead to make a trip to the shopping center simply "to buy you a decent pair of shorts for Florida," as my fashion-consultant wife strongly suggested.

Two hours later we returned home with two shopping bags full of clothes, an unfinished rocking chair and a checkbook that was \$186 lighter—all for a bunch of "necessities" I hadn't even known I'd needed when I awoke that morning. But I've become accustomed to such shopping trips over the years.

I promised myself it would be different last year when I went to purchase my first new car in years. I bought road test magazines, then methodically planned and plotted, compared and price-shopped. I sloshed around a Pontiac lot in the driving rain while the salesmen stood inside and made value judgments about my credit rating based on my blue jeans and somewhat less than "Like Nu" '72 Nova.

I was driven around a huge lot in a ridiculous golf cart by a Chevy salesman who proved he wasn't totally interested in selling me a stripped-down Citation when he literally jumped ship and left me idling in the cart with the fringe on top while he rushed over to the three-piece suit fellow ogling a Corvette that cost more than my house.

I rode my bike over to the Ford dealership, and the salesman there lost my business after the third Hell's Angel joke. The Plymouth dealer's "dream car for you, Mr. Harrington," turned out to have more than \$2,500 worth of options that I neither wanted nor could afford.

Like many people, I admire Japanese technology and have heard a lot of good things about that country's cars, so I decided to saunter in to a foreign car showroom to see what kind of a deal I could get on an import. I soon found that the buyer-seller game is played a little differently there.

I found that you just don't order a Toyota or Honda in the color you prefer, equipped with the options you want, at a price you've bargained for. Instead, you are informed that your name will be added to a long list of buyers, and when your number comes up and a car comes in that might vaguely resemble what you want, you are given the golden opportunity to quickly come in and buy it at full dealer list, plus \$400 to \$1,200 for those all-encompassing "destination and dealer-prep" charges. Not interested in the car that comes in? No sweat, the next guy is... and your name goes to the end of the list again.

Happiness must be selling a product that people are clamoring for, be it Cabbage Patch dolls or Corollas.

What's all this got to do with motorcycles? Just this—while I was looking through those ads for televisions the other day and pondering my poor spending habits, I happened to glance at the motorcycle ads, and one look was enough to bring out the impulse buyer in me again.

If you haven't looked recently, head over to your local dealer and check out his prices. You remember your dealer—he's the guy who runs the shop where you can generally go hang out and talk bikes without a lot of high-pressure sales

techniques. He's the guy who stocks parts for the 40 or 50 different models of a brand of bike and yet still catches hell when he doesn't have a left fork cover for your '74 TY175. He's the guy you call when your simple do-it-yourself top-end job has turned into a pile of foreign, oily objects on the garage floor and you need help determining where the gizmo fits into the framus.

Yessir, your motorcycle dealer's the guy who spent a half-hour last weekend telling you the right kind of oil for your bike before you rode over to the local discount mart and bought the stuff he recommended to save 40 cents a can over his prices. He's the guy you want to service your new bike, since it's too damn far to drive down to the discounter where you bought it. Come to think of it, your dealer often is also the guy who sponsors the local hare scrambles each year, donates prizes for your poker run, and provides bikes to the local rider education courses.

Sure, the days of the mom 'n pop motorcycle shop where personalized attention is the norm are rapidly fading in the face of tough economic times and stiff competition. And granted, there are a number of motorcycle shops that spring up, take your money and run. But the good dealers are out there, and quite frankly many of them can use your help and support right now.

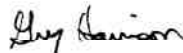
With 2- and 3-year-old bikes on the floor selling for a fraction of their original list price, it doesn't take Lee Iacocca to explain that (a) it's a ridiculously good time to buy a bike, and (b) it's a terrible, perhaps critical time for your dealer.

Not only has a dealer lost whatever profit he'd hoped for on a bike at today's prices, but often he's paid a monthly floor plan fee to the manufacturer for the right to have it sitting in his dealership. He's stocked parts for it, serviced it, and insured it, yet now he's offering it to you at prices often 50 percent below list. Try offering your local GM dealer \$5,000 for a \$10,000 car and see how fast you're shown the door.

Times are tough for everyone in motorcycling. Pity the poor private owner advertising to sell the \$50 he paid \$3,300 for in '82 for a paltry two grand, only to find a dealer ad next to his classified listing a brand new bike like his for \$1,699!

Luckily, it appears the worst is behind us. Many of the manufacturers have scaled down their '84 product lines, and what they are producing are some of the most exciting and technologically innovative designs in years. That, combined with the rat-killing deals offered on older models, might stimulate sales enough to keep the bank off your dealer's back for another year's worth of service to you. Then again, it might not.

Think about that the next time you need a quart of oil, some spark plugs or a new helmet. Then support the people who support the sport. And while you're there, take a good look at some of the unbelievable bike prices. You might find that at today's prices, it makes good business sense to become an impulse buyer.



Greg Harrison, Executive Editor

Hall-Burdette

MOTORCYCLES

Norton


MOTO GUZZI

DUCATI

We have been selling and servicing Nortons since 1948 and have a good supply of parts and accessories, both new and used. Our mechanic, Bob Bennett, has been repairing Nortons for over 20 years and is a recognized expert. Thor Berke, our parts manager, has a thorough familiarity with all Norton parts and accessories.

2010 DEL PABO BLVD.
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95815
PHONE (916) 825-1797

Norton

I would like to thank the dealers who have advertising on this page for their support of our club. To the members I would like to say, drop in and check them out; and, if you buy, mention that you saw their ad. Your patronage is appreciated!

Also, there is more space available for anyone out there who might like to advertise. The rates are \$35 for 6 months and \$60 for 1 year. Who could ask for a better deal.

Call or write: Dave Kerst, 371 Hickory Ave., Tracy CA. 95376 (209) 835-7468 until 2PM or (415) 443-6300 between 4PM and 10PM.

Norton
TRIUMPH
LOMBARDI
DUCATI
MOTO MORINI

T.T.
MOTORS

Norton Owners - T.T. specializes in European motorcycles and offers complete parts, service, and machine shop for all the wonderful bikes we sell.

Stop by and visit and check us out!

- * Complete line of British tools
- * Manuals and spares for your Norton
- * Speed Equipment:

Megacycle and webcam camshafts
Single Mikuni kits
Exhaust port repair \$45 each
Valve jobs and port work
Cylinder boring and surfacing

- * 10% discount on all parts (except Lucas) to N.O.C. members

2800 Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tues. - Sat. 845-8235

TRIUMPH
Norton **MOTO GUZZI** **DUCATI**
MUNROE MOTORS, INC.
MOTORCYCLES
SALES - SERVICE - PARTS

Munroe has three mechanics that are familiar with Nortons and have been for a number of years. We can replace exhaust ports with the head on the bike and don't know of anyone else who can. The job looks like original factory! Call for a quote on shop prices. We also have a good Norton parts supply.

MUNROE MOTORS

INC.
412 VALENCIA ST.
SAN FRANCISCO 94103
PHONE 626-3496

Gentlemen:

Regarding Art Sirota's letter in the NORTON NOTICE No. 71 -- the "S" model was only available in red and blue.

The confusion comes from the first "Commando Roadster" which was introduced mid-1970 and was only made for a few months. The Roadster was available in red, yellow, and several metallic colors. This model had all the same hardware as the "S" except different pipes and side cover decals. It had the same skinny front fender with chrome stays, 3.00 X 19 Avon rib front tire and Avon GP rear tire (as the "S" model sales brochure specifies), chrome headlight ring (with white plastic caps on the lower mounting studs), chrome air filter plate, chrome chainguard (rounded at the back - not like later models), cylinder barrels painted silver, polished rocker covers, flat seat, central oil tank, and a few other items different from the Fastback. A check of the 1963 thru 1970 parts book confirms this. Also, good detail pictures of the Roadster are the Norton inside cover ads in CYCLE magazine from June 1970 to about February 1971 -- of course including the Norton girl. Note the word "Roadster" on the side cover. This is the only model with this.

I own a 1970 Roadster (138918) and a 1969 "S" model (131393) both with very low mileage (1800 miles on the Roadster) and both completely original. I also have three other Cammandos: 1968, 1971 and 1973..

Both the 1969 "S" and the 1970 bikes are very fast and, in my opinion, handle better than later models. I've raced the "S" quite a bit and it's really quick on a tight course. For racing, I mount another set of wheels with 3.60 K&B front and 4.10 K&B rear and a front brake with stiffener kit and Ferodo AM4 linings. This brake really works.

Enclosed is a photo of the "S" in action last year. If you look closely you can see NUC sticker on the rear fender between the tail light and seat.

Bill Thomas

Editors Note: Bill sent a nice picture of his bike but unfortunately the photo really won't look that good by the time we reproduce it and since it's about \$15 to go through the process we're not printing it although we'll return it to him. The point is do send in your pictures and we'll try to print them but try to start out with black and white and start with as close a shot as possible as the Norton Notice doesn't hold detail well. Thanks.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In September 1983 I joined my wife, Adrienne, in England and began a fabulous tour of that most historic country. While Adrienne finished up work in her London office I made a few "motorcycle related" jaunts in my hired car.

First to Cornucopia Enterprises, Barking, Essex, to collect an alloy fuel tank for my featherbed framed special. When she saw it Adrienne exclaimed "How the H are you going to get that home?"

Next day off to Fair Spares, Rugeley, Staffordshire, to see Les and Sue Emery and pick up a load of previously ordered spares. The shop is in a quaint block of old storefronts (see photo) and a the shirt on display proclaims: "Be Patriotic, Burn a Jap Bike". A visit to Fair Spares is a must for any Norton Clubber.

Off on our tour all around the island stopping at every sight imaginable, not the least of which was the town of SKILLINGTON, Lincolnshire. Sorry to say that none of my relatives live there anymore.

As I am a Vincenteer as well as a Norton owner, we made the obligatory stop at the VDC Spares Co., Lymm, Cheshire, and chatted with Jane Greaves, Managing Director, while purchasing a few parts.

When back in London, I rode the "tube" out to East Sheen near Richmond, to visit Geoff Dodkin's shop. Geoff is a Velocette expert and parts stockist who worked with the Goodmans during Velo's heyday. Super guy, with funny tales to tell.

One of my close friends in London is Jim Shaw, one of the owners of Auto Tempo Instrumentation Ltd., which is the place to have a chronometric serviced. He's located me a Smiths Magnetic Racing Tach for my project and took the time off from business to squire us around London.

All in all, England is a worthwhile vacation land, especially for a Brit-Bike enthusiast.

I did get the fuel tank home without a scratch....

Cheerio,

Tom Skillington

Ed. Same score on Tom's picture, but again do send them in as it might've made a good cover shot, the secret is a close up so the details are big so that as we lose them through the various processes at least the big details are still there.

PARAPHERNALIA

For Sale

- N.O.C. paraphernalia as follows:
- 3" square machine badge.....\$6.00
 - Label pin.....1.25
 - 4 1/2 sticker.....1.00
 - 2" sticker......50
 - key fob with club badge.....1.50

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

Contact Tom Borman phone (415) 595-1954 at 2600 Belmont Canyon Rd. Belmont Ca. 94002, 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, then send only .20 cents extra. If you want a cushioned enveloped like the post office uses, you'll have to send about a dollar to cover the cost and postage. Thanks.

IN THE CLUTCHES

By Scot Narburger

Here's a little information I've picked up by doing these 3000 many times... in the clutch basket, that is. Less than a month ago I observed that the clutch needs to be cleaned about every 3000 to keep it from dragging. This is generally true, but the time and mileage between cleanings may change depending on the lubricating fluid and its level in the primary case and on the type of clutch plates being used. I've used three different fluids in the past for lubricant. Engine oil works well, but needs cleaned out at the usual 3000 mile interval. Some folks recommend automatic transmission fluid, but I lost 2 primary chains in less than 2000 miles due to the inferior lubricating properties of this stuff. A Torco product called MTF (Motorcycle Transmission Fluid) seems to work best in that it tends to gum up the works less frequently than engine oil and still provides adequate lubrication. No matter what fluid you use, put only 5 oz (fluid) of it in the primary case. That's enough to wet the primary chain yet still keep the clutch as "dry" as possible.

Now things really get interesting. Norton made three different kinds of clutch plates over the years and all three have different thicknesses, tooth hardesses, and susceptibility to gumming up. The original Commando plates (I'm talking about the driven plates with the teeth on the inner diameter) were made of solid fiber. They tended to gum up pretty fast and were also prone to slipping when the going got hot. They did have the advantage that they didn't eat notches into the soft clutch centers supplied by the factory in those days. The fiber plates were also the thickest plates that Norton made.

To combat the slipping problem, Norton brought out steel plates with bits of Ferrodo friction material bonded to them. These worked quite well as far as slipping and gumming were concerned, but tended to notch the clutch hub in as few as 10,000 miles. The result was that the clutch would fail to fully disengage making neutral almost impossible to find. The only cure was to replace the hub at regular intervals. These plates were thinner than the fiber plates.

Norton took three steps to try to put an end to the clutch problems when they brought out the Mk IIA 850's. First, they went to a hardened clutch hub in an effort to eliminate the notching problem. They also went to bronze coated steel plates to further improve friction. They also reduced the thickness of the pressure plate and added another set of driving and driven plates. The combination worked well. It didn't slip and went quite a way without needing a clean. The problem was that the plates and hub were now of comparable hardness and the two would mutually self destruct. In my ol' 1970 Fastback, the hub was slightly notched and the plate teeth worn to points in about 15,000 miles. This rate is probably worse than might be expected from later bikes with own drive rear wheels (the 1970 vintage machines retained the bolt up rear hub from Atlas days).

Barnett has been making clutch plates for Nortons for a long time. They are made of aluminum with friction material bonded to them. They don't slip, but they do grab. They grab to such an extent that there is very little slipping during clutch engagement which can result in broken parts in the tranny. The 850 basket I bought came with broken tranny and primary cases, three extra sets of gears, and Barnett plates.

Since the demise of the Commando, several manufacturers have come out with teflon (makol) lined clutch cables. These reduce the amount of friction in the cable and considerably improve clutch action. With the correct routing (no sharp bends and correct alignment of the actuating arm in the tranny) effort at the lever could be cut by half.

After having been the route with all these combinations, I decided to pick and choose between the available plates, lubricants, and cables and come up with the "ideal" clutch. I started with the hardened clutch center and thin pressure plate and used all fiber plates except for one Barnett plate. I also used a teflon lined cable from Fair Spares that was liberally juiced with LPS 1 by a Yamaluber. I also used 5 oz of MTF lubricant. The combination resulted in a clutch that required almost no effort at the lever (an honest one finger clutch) but that would slip under heavy acceleration. This wasn't any good so I substituted another Barnett plate for one of the fiber ones. The clutch no longer slipped, but it was back to 3000 miles between cleanings. Lever effort also went up slightly. This last item piqued my curiosity as to why. I started by measuring the thickness of the various plates and found them to vary by as much as .020" from type to type. It turns out that the thicker the stack of plates, the less force is generated by the diaphragm clutch spring. That's great for lever effort, but there's also less force keeping the plates from slipping. That's why the Barnett plates cured the slipping problem: they were both thinner and stickier.

So that's where my "super clutch" stands today. I have added a dog leg lever which helps further reduce lever effort (back to one strong finger). The cleaning interval is still about 3000 miles (due to the Barnett plates sticking to the steel driving plates) but the clutch center will last forever (its much harder than either the fiber or the aluminum). I was talking to a fella that raced Nortons in AFM Battle Of The Twins who said that Barnett had come out with a new

friction material that didn't gum up as bad as the old stuff. He also mentioned plates made in Italy that were even better in that respect. I hope to get some of these plates to see if they'll stretch out the time between cleanings, but for the time being its not too hard putting up with a little maintenance for reduced lever effort and longer hub life.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH
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Harvey

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9 A.M. - 2 P.M. weekdays
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1969 Commando "S" in good mechanical condition with 19,000 miles. Asking \$900.00, including a few extras. Call Bill Lear (415) 493-3962 evening and weekends

WANTED: Information leading to the person I loaned my copy of "Norton Twins" by Roy Bacon to. Gene's trying to sell me some old beat up Dommie and I want more info. . .

FOR SALE: Fiberglass Roadster tank, sidecovers, handlebar fairing, steel panned seat. New paint (black with red letters and lines), \$140. Clip on bars, MM-2 x 19 alloy rim, \$25. Wixom barn door handlebar fairing, \$25. Disk brake set, less hub, \$125. Stainless rear fender, \$20. Mk II battery box and air filter assy, \$25. Std. foot rest, brake and off side, offer. 850 headlamp shell, \$10. 850 and 750 frames, \$125. 32 mm twin Mikuni set up, \$125. Many other parts, call. Will trade for engine and tranny parts. Scot, 415-455-8776 and leave message.

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