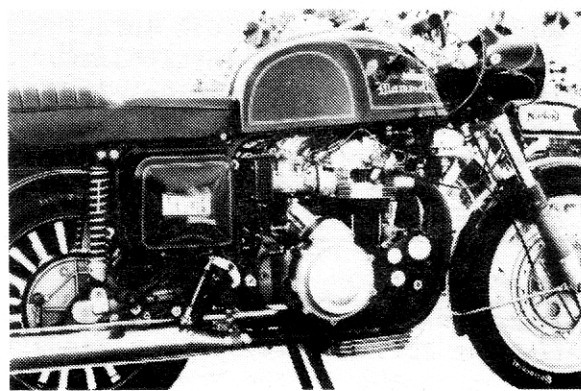
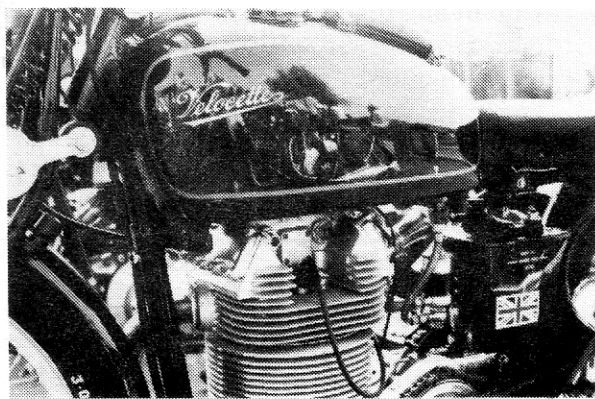
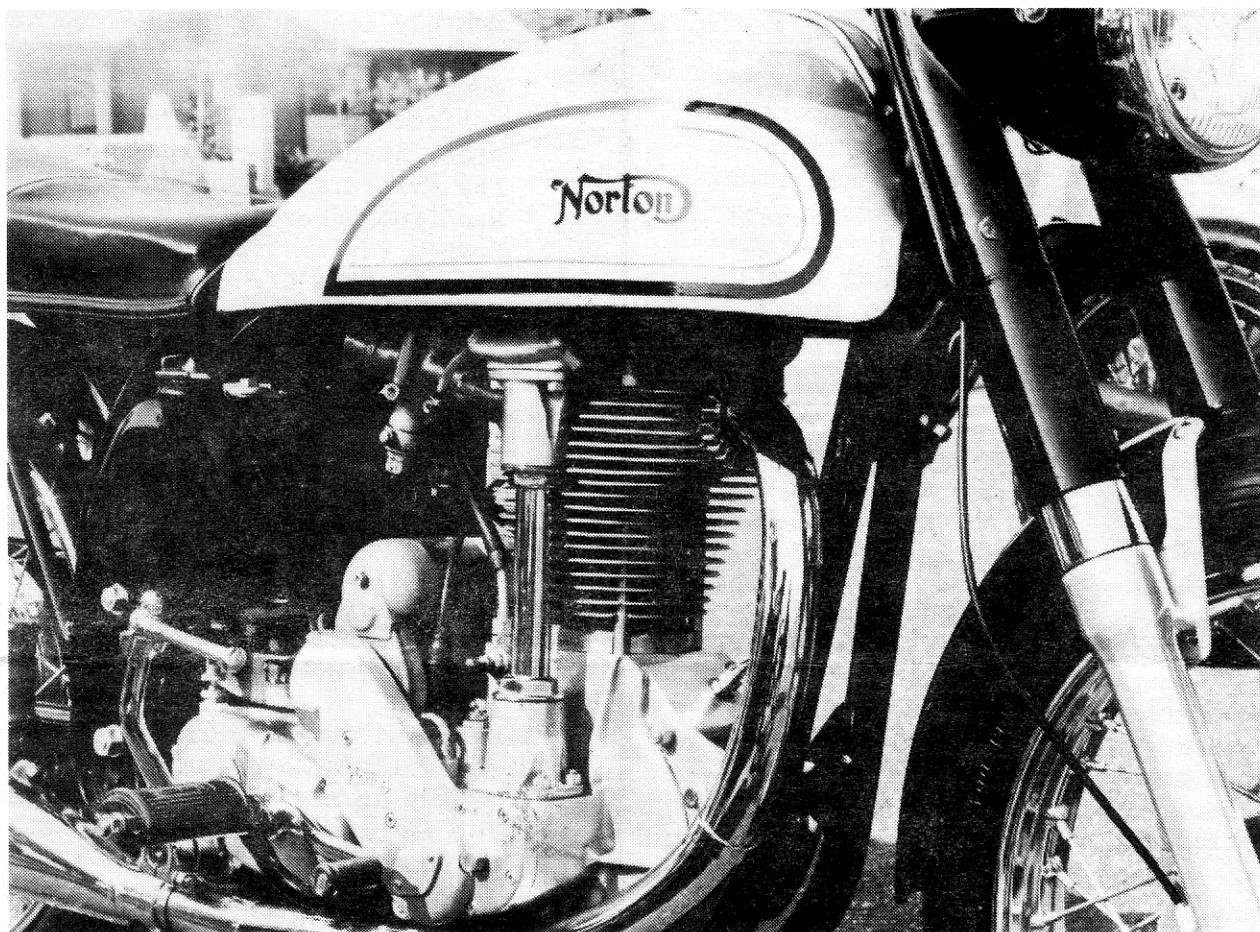


Norton Notice

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 5

AUGUST 1978



REPORT FROM VISALIA - What's a Visalia?
SEE PAGE 4

A Publication of the
San Francisco Branch





NORTON
NOTICE

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San Francisco Branch of
the Norton Owners Club

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All articles and advertisements in the Norton Notice are for the sole use of the members and prospective members of the San Francisco Branch of the Norton Owners Club. Please obtain permission from the Branch officers before reproducing any material contained herein.

Members are strongly encouraged to submit any articles, photographs or other materials for publication in the Norton Notice. Technical info. and member feedback are particularly welcome. Photographs should be black and white prints, preferably 5"x7" for ease of printing. Please submit all materials to the Branch secretary.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the San Francisco Branch of the Norton Owners Club includes: bi-monthly issues of the Roadholder Magazine, published by the Norton Owners Club in England, monthly issues of the Norton Notice, published by the San Francisco Branch, monthly Branch meetings and rides at various locations in the bay area, other Branch functions organized by the officers throughout the year, and free advertising in the monthly Norton Notice Trading Post.

Membership dues are \$15 per year, and cheques endorsed to the Norton Owners Club may be sent to the Branch secretary on or before the expiration date on the membership card. New members must fill out a membership application form which is available upon request.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Members are requested to notify the Branch secretary immediately of any address or phone number changes.

ADVERTISING

Members and non-members may submit any Norton-related advertising to the Branch secretary at any time. Please remember to inform the secretary of any changes (additions, omissions, etc.) to be made in previously submitted advertising.

MEMBERSHIP LISTS

The Branch secretary will furnish a complete membership list to any member upon request, and each member will be sent an up-to-date list periodically. Machines owned will be included on the list for ease of spare part acquisition.

BRANCH MEETINGS AND RIDES

Meetings are generally held on the second Thursday of the month, starting at 7:30pm. The meeting location is often a bar with a British atmosphere, and the specific venue will be announced in the Norton Notice each month. Suggestions of new possibilities in the bay area will always be welcome, as will offers to host a meeting. In general, meetings at member's homes have been poorly attended, but if any member would like to show his machines or give a Norton trip slide show or whatever, please say so. Rides will generally meet at 10:00am on the following Sunday, at a convenient venue to be announced in the Norton Notice each month. In the event of actual rain on the morning of the ride, it will probably be postponed one week. Please call one of the Branch officers if the weather looks doubtful.

JULY MEETING

A group of twenty-five or so gathered at the British Bankers Club in Menlo Park on July 13th, and everyone seemed to enjoy the pleasant environment and good cheer. The primary topic of discussion after Bob Marshall had called the meeting to order was the proposed changes in our local branch of the NOC. The founder of the SF NOC Branch, Bob Bausch, made it clear to the group present that the local group should remain a branch of the NOC, and that we should offer "associate membership" to anyone interested in receiving our monthly NORTON NOTICE and keeping current on local Norton activity, etc., but not wishing to become a full dues-paying member of the Norton Owners Club. Thus "associate members" would enjoy all of the privileges of other NOC members, except that they would not receive the bimonthly NOC magazine, ROADHOLDER. All present at the meeting seemed to support Bob's idea, and Bob Marshall and I felt that it included all of the essential principles of our initial proposal. The proposed name change of the branch will therefore be modified as follows: the branch will henceforth be known as the NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH of the NORTON OWNERS CLUB, and Northern California Norton Association will pass on into oblivion. However, the proposed association with the United States Norton Owners Association (USNOA) was, to the best of my knowledge, unanimously approved, and will therefore go ahead as previously announced in this rag.

If any branch members have any further suggestions, complaints or generally relevant comments to offer on the above subject, they are hereby strongly encouraged to attend the August branch meeting, which will be the last scheduled discussion of the changes. After the August meet I will make arrangements for new T-shirts and badges to be made with the local club insignia. Jim Dolmage and Bob Bausch (?) are working on alternatives to the one which Bob Marshall designed and placed on the cover of the July NORTON NOTICE. Their efforts will be on display at the August meeting, hopefully, and a vote will be taken at that time. So please come!!!

In other business, Alex Stewart brought and read his letter to be sent forthwith to Peter Thistle, secretary of the Norton Owners Club in England. The complete text of Alex's letter appears on back of this page. Although we shouldn't expect the central committee of the NOC to lower our dues, at least one member has voiced his opinion, which seems to be shared by the majority of the branch members. Those who heard his letter read at the July branch meeting thought it sounded great, and unanimously endorsed it. We'll just have to wait and see if it elicits a favorable response in England.

JULY RIDE

16 Nortons gathered at the Sausalito ferry dock parking lot on Sunday, July 16th, and then headed north for a backroads ride to Tomales. Not only was the weather perfect for Norton ride through the country, but the route taken this time, at the suggestion of Steve Mickens, a new member from San Raphael, turned out to be absolutely superb. It was so fine in fact, that I would like to pass it on to those of you who couldn't make it. We left Hwy. 101 at Greenbrae and headed west on Sir Francis Drake Blvd., which took us through San Anselmo and Fairfax, and then out into sparsely populated parts of Marin. Turning off at San Geronimo onto the Nicasio Road, the speedy group soon found themselves all alone out in a dry, but nevertheless beautiful countryside. The road was essentially free of traffic, and the many sweepers with just the right amount of banking and very few bumps made the fast run a true Norton rider's joy. Although the female-type passengers were a little frightened at times (wouldn't you be too if you were on the back?), they held on steadfastly and came through OK. At the Nicasio Reservoir the group headed northeast on the Pt. Reyes - Petaluma Road, followed by a nice run out to the Shoreline Highway (Rt. 1) via Wilson Hill Road, Marshall - Petaluma Road and then Chileno Valley Road. The whole ride was so enjoyable, particularly because of the total absence of the typical weekend car and camper traffic, that all should try it.

STEVE

ALEX STEWART'S LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NORTON OWNERS CLUB IN ENGLAND

3775 El Centro Street
Palo Alto, California
July 13, 1978

Mr. Peter Thistle, Esq.
30 Rose Hill Avenue
Sutton, Surrey
England

Dear Sir:

By this time, you will probably have received a copy of the San Francisco Branch's newsletter of June, so it will come as no surprise when I tell you that there is a movement towards reorganizing the group.

The suggestion has been put forward to form a new Northern California Norton Association which would assume the memberships of all present N.O.C. branch members of which there are now over 60. Those branch members who wish to maintain their association with the N.O.C. would have the privilege of doing so by merely submitting the required membership dues. The current board of this branch would wear two hats, performing functions for both associations and thereby maintaining the minimum required membership to qualify as a branch. The reason for this proposed reorganization is, of course, purely financial. The majority of the group are (sic) of the opinion that the \$15.00 annual fees, submitted to the home office, are far in excess of the value received. As an overseas branch, the general membership here is not in a position to participate in your rallies (sic) or your spares' program or any other function put on by the club. The whole matter boils down to the cost of subscribing to the Roadholder magazine and few of our members feel that the magazine is worth \$15.00 per year.

This suggested reorganization was tabled at the last general meeting and would probably have been pushed through had it not been for a few pro-Britishers who convinced the membership that such a decision should not be made without first consulting with the parent organization. We were able therefore to gain some time to write you and place a proposal forward for your consideration. It has been suggested that a compromise be reached in which the overseas membership fees be fixed at three pounds Sterling (\$6.00) per annum. This would enable the branch to reduce our local membership fees and at the same time maintain a small sum for operating expenses.

As we mentioned above, there are now over 60 members in the San Francisco Branch with the prospect of additional members joining should the fees be reduced. Under this proposal, the net proceeds to the home office would be at least \$360.00 a year whereas, under the proposed reorganization, a headcount of those members who are prepared to pay \$15.00 to receive the club magazine would at the most provide about \$150.00 per year.

I am sure I speak for many of our members when I say that an affinity with the Norton Owners Club is desirable, but yet there are other members who would say that the California group will continue its social functions regardless and that there is no point in being a branch of an overseas group unless there is (sic) some tangible benefits involved.

It was proposed at our last meeting that this matter be again brought up in September. Should you agree, we are sure that the net benefits will be greater and although it may be decided to officially change our name to incorporate a greater area of California for the branch, we may be able to stave off a mass exodus of the membership.

Yours sincerely,

Alexander J. Stewart, Member
N.O.C. San Francisco Branch

AUGUST MEETING

THURSDAY, August 17 at Edinburgh Castle, 950 Geary, San Francisco (885-4070), we will hold our last meeting concerning the proposed changes in the Norton Owners Club that has been a topic of discussion lo these last few meetings. Anyone having anything to say on the subject who would like to be heard, please try to attend.

Also, at this meeting, we should have a guest who has been concerning himself with EPA noise and emission regulations dealing with motorcycles. Yes, Big Brothers are getting into motorcycles in a big way and would, if they had their way, legislate the motorcycle as we know it today out of existence. As a group of motorcycle enthusiasts, we can have a voice in what EPA can or cannot implement, but first we have to know what they want to do and what we can do about it.

Meeting time, as usual, is 7:30 P.M.

AUGUST RIDE

SUNDAY, August 20

Howard Johnson's at the intersection of Hiway 101 and First St., San José, 10:00 in the morning.

LEFTOVER PARTS

For his courageous efforts in enlightening the world and furthering the legend of Norton, Dan O'Neill has been made an honorary member of the Norton Owners Club (and any modifications thereof).

From the latest issue of NORTON NEWS via United States Norton Owners Association, comes this good news: According to an official at the vestiges of NVT, Norton will announce next spring, a superbike replacement for the Commando. We're still alive folks, so cross your fingers.

FUTURE ARTICLES

Look for another technical article from Leonard Allen next month.

Also in the near future: your fearless club president has been working on a modification to those beastly electric start motors so they work instead of just grunt. Please forward any derogatory comments to your nearby Japanese bike dealer.

BOB

TRADING POST

WANTED 1973 or 1974 850 Commando in good condition. Jeff Popjoy, 415) 352-2299.

That's it folks, we are starting all over on the Trading Post. Many ads have been in for quite a while now, and if you haven't sold it by now, you might want to change your price or re-do your entire list of parts for sale or your items wanted.

The following has been established as a guideline by which ads will be run in the future:

1. Ads in by the 15th of the month will be run in the next month's newsletter.
2. Ads will run for two (2) months without renewal and can be renewed by letting one of the officers know.
3. To place an ad, a phone call to one of the officers is sufficient, but a postcard is easier to keep up with. Besides, some of us spell "Commando" with only one "M", and we want to get the ad right.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ON MOTORCYCLES

Please excuse me if I editorialize here on the subject of accident prevention and damage minimization. I feel that a brief reminder to those of us who get careless once in a while is in order. On Sunday afternoon, July 16th, while the others in the July ride group were having lunch at the Nick's Cove Seafood restaurant in Marshall, Jim Dolmage and I took off to buy some gas up in Tomales. About a mile north of the restaurant, a sharp, blind, off-camber turn surprised Jim, and he was unable to hold his bike tight on the inside. Before he knew what had happened, a car coming around in the other lane had hit him head-on, throwing him into the air, and destroying the front end of his beautiful 850. Jim was riding with a cast on his left arm, from an earlier wrist fracture, and it may have impaired his ability to react as quickly as he should have. In spite of the lack of head protection, Jim was not injured as seriously as he might have been, but did refracture his arm. I hope that all members will accept this as a word to the wise. Please be careful!

STEVE

THANKS AND A PLEA FOR PARTS
FROM JIM DOLMAGE

First I would like to express my sincere thanks to everyone on the Sunday ride in Marin for their support, mental and physical. It was highly appreciated and will not be forgotten. (Especially you, Gene) I would also like to extend a plea for any word on parts to help repair my bike, a 1975 Commando 850. I need a complete front end and some various small right side parts - footpegs, bracket, pipes, etc. I am particularly interested in a double-disk front end, and would like to talk with anyone who has or knows of one and can advise me on how to go about it. Again, thank you all, and as soon as my left arm cast is off I'll be back on the road with a higher respect for the speed and power of the best motorcycle in the world.

James A. Dolmage
Phone: 364-8659

Good idea to wait until that cast is off Jim. It's impossible to know whether the accident could have been avoided had your left arm not been somewhat hampered by the full arm cast, and your right arm tired as a result of the strenuous ride from the peninsula all the way up to Tomales. I'm sure I speak for everyone in offering Jim the best wishes of the club for a rapid and complete recovery. We all realize, I hope, that Jim was extremely lucky to have escaped with as few injuries as he did receive. That he didn't hit his head or injure his spinal cord was almost miraculous. Jim has told me that he now feels it to be foolhardy to ride without a helmet and leather jacket, and says that he plans to make that his first purchase. I guess we can all learn something from his unfortunate experience. Let's continue to enjoy motorcycling, but let's not take any chances with our skin and skull. I for one will gladly loan or sell my spare Shoei S-20 (full coverage) helmet to anyone who would like to borrow or buy it. Simply not having a helmet is not an acceptable excuse for not wearing one. I realize that I've already editorialized on this subject far too much for some folks' liking, but I'm willing to take any amount of criticism if even one future injury is prevented. Safe riding to all.

STEVE

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT SYNTHETIC OILS (PROBABLY MORE),
BUT WERE TOO SLUGGISH TO ASK

This info arrived just as this month's issue was going to press, and therefore didn't make it into the Technical Tips column, where it really belongs. It was sent in by Clay Walley, one of our San Francisco members, and by the sound of it somewhat of an amateur expert on the subject. Here's what Clay has to say:

DON'T run Mobil-1 in a Norton - it's much too thin. Almost any oil is better. ALL PROOF produces "Phase 5" synthetics (neo-pentyl polyol esters) which give the best performance with regard to low carbon and varnish formation, low evaporation rate and pour point, and least thinning at high temperatures (that is what the Society of Automotive Engineers said). Prestone Synthetic is a "Phase 1" oil, which means that the base stock is poly-glycol ether. Mobil-1 uses "Phase-2" base stock, which makes it a poly-olefin. EON, Amsoil and Xonex SL-1000 are all "Phase-3" synthetics, which are made from a di-ester base. LTO is a "Phase-4" synthetic, which means that it is a polyol ester and has better film-strength, higher thermal stability, and greater tolerance toward seals (but I wonder if it kikes walruses!). According to the ALL PROOF blurb from which all this info was derived, the current state of the technology lies in the production of "Phase-5" neo-pentyl polyol esters, which have even higher film strengths, greater viscosity index, and perform better at high temperatures.

Clay says in his letter that ALL PROOF also makes racing oils with a film strength of 500,000 PSI. Cost is \$5.00 per quart, and he says he'd be happy to get some for anyone who wants to give it a try. He also wants members to know that he does Norton tune-ups at reasonable rates, and can do welding as well. For those of you who are interested, his phone number is 621-0773.

I will send a copy of the complete info sheet from ALL PROOF to anyone who asks. It's four pages long, but very interesting.

STEVE

NORTON NOTICE TECHNICAL TIPS

This month's technical column was written for us by Leonard Allen, who seems to have put quite a few miles on his two Commando Nortons, and assures me that he's learned some important things the hard way. His first Technical Tips column is all about the PRIMARY CHAIN, which most of us tend to forget about until problems develop. Hopefully, Len's words of advice will be of value to members who don't pay enough attention to this very important part.

Steve

First, let me assure you that I am not a professional mechanic. I do have two Nortons, however - a 1972 750 Combat and a 1975 electric start 850. I do all of my maintenance including all overhauls, etc. I have 31,000 miles on the 750, and 15,000 on the 850. I would like to share my experiences and observations with you in hopes of helping you avoid pitfalls I have seen or experienced. These will not be too detailed (i.e. how to do it), unless the reader response indicates that's wanted.

The most costly pitfall is the primary chain. If you try to check the 3/8" slack through the inspection port as called for in the manual you will never have it tight enough, and at about 9,000 to 20,000 miles you might have a main bearing fail. I have seen this a number of times. It is best to pull the primary cover off to check chain tension, then you can really get a good hold on the chain at the top run to check for 3/8" up-down play. This should be 3/8" total from full up to full down. If an adjustment is indicated, the following steps should be followed.

The cover is easily removed with one 3/4" nut located in the center of the cover. The left foot peg assembly must be removed or swiveled out of the way. It is held on by the 1/2" bolts at the rear. First you loosen the large bolt on the right side at the top of the transmission; it holds the transmission to the black cradle. The head of the bolt on the left is keyed and does not turn. Then on the right side by the large bolt just loosened, there is a block with a bolt through it with a 1/2" nut on each end. Loosen the forward bolt if the chain was too loose, and turn the rear nut

until the chain tension is correct, and then lock the front nut. Be sure to re-tighten the large transmission nut.

There is another advantage to pulling the primary cover for this job. It is a good time to clean up the chain case. When draining the primary oil without pulling the cover, the clutch fiber that wears off is not drained. With the cover off, you can drain it all out with some paper towel. Do not use solvent as it gains you nothing and can dilute the oil in the chain causing it to wear more quickly. Clean out the outer cover and re-install. I find that the original gasket can be used at least five times without starting to leak. Be sure to put in new oil. Don't laugh.....it has happened many times, even at bike shops.

Now that the primary is done, there is one more thing to do that is not very obvious. When you moved the transmission to the rear to tighten the primary chain, you loosened the rear chain. It needs to be adjusted now to complete the job.

I usually replace the primary chain at 20,000 mile intervals. I do not know how long they will really last, but if allowed to wear out the engine sprocket and outer clutch basket may be damaged, and they cost much more than chains. One other advantage to adjusting the primary chain frequently with the cover off is that you will see anything going wrong long before it leaves you stranded out on the road somewhere.

Of course the electric start models have a hydraulic chain tensioner and need no adjustment, but it is still a good idea to pull the cover when changing the oil in order to clean up the residue from the clutch, sprockets, etc., and to assure yourself that all is well inside.

Leonard Allen

ANY FEEDBACK, PRO OR CON, ABOUT THESE TECHNICAL TIP COLUMNS WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED. PLEASE SEND THEM TO STEVE AND STATE WHETHER YOU MIND IF THEY ARE PRINTED IN THE NEXT NORTON NOTICE.

C.A.M.A. MEET - VISALIA - April 29, 1978 - Through the eyes of a "casual observer"

Better late than never, they always say, so here goes. My apologies for not having written up something about this year's spectacle in Visalia a little sooner, but there have been many other important items to put in the last two issues of N.N.

The meet is held each year in Visalia, and this year's, the 12th annual meet, if I am not mistaken, was on April 29th and 30th. For anyone who hasn't the faintest idea what I'm talking about, the C.A.M.A. is the Classic and Antique Motorcycle Ass'n. The Visalia meet is a weekend affair, the purpose of which seems to be to bring all the beautiful old bikes out of mothballs and show them off for a day or two to one of the largest and most appreciative audiences the old machines could ever ask for. Everyone seems to roll into town on the Friday evening before the show, and sit around drinking and talking about all the good old days when Ariels and Velocettes (Nortons?) were seen on the roads fairly frequently and nobody had yet heard of a Honda (what's that?). All the motels in town have many motorcycles and motorcycle trailers parked outside, and most of the bars and restaurants have their fair share of antique motorcycle buffs sitting around chewing the fat well into the night.

Early Saturday morning the big shopping center parking lot starts filling up, and the motorcycles entered in the show take their places in the special cordoned-off area. Inevitably, there is an enormous contingent of Velocettes of all shapes, sizes and vintage; nearby there is a big group of Ariels, and then a hardy band of Nortons, some old and some very new. One of them, Norm Kelley's John Player Special, will later in the day be voted the "Best Modern Classic" by the C.A.M.A. judges. Moving around the square, one comes to the old Harley-Davidsons and the Indians, many sporting side-cars. Then there is a large collection of antique BMW's, all black as BMW's were, and showing beautifully how the German engineers and designers changed the machine gradually through the years. And so it goes as one strolls around the square.

Interspersed among the various old machines that most of us have heard of, one finds a few rarities such as a Sunbeam or a Münch Mammoth. Then a Douglas Dragonfly appears, and behind it a Panther. Soon the casual observer discovers that there are many motorcycle marques that he's never heard of before, much less seen up close. Not only is he getting a chance to see these old, but perfectly restored beauties, but he can even chat with their owners and watch them fire up their cherished antiques and ride around the inside of the square a few times. Is this motorcycle heaven? Perhaps not, but for anyone who has come to like motorcycles relatively late in their history, it sure is a nice way to learn a bit about their evolution down through the twentieth century, and see all the marques that have gone the way of the dinosaurs. It's both fun and sad.

In the afternoon, all the machines to be entered in the judging line up near the judges' stand for close inspection, and here one sees the true cream of the crop of the whole show. Only those that are 100% stock and perfectly cherry stand a chance in this level of competition, and, as will be announced at the award presentations, most of the winners are in better condition than when they were first seen on a showroom floor. It soon becomes obvious to the casual observer that there are many folks out there who are truly in love with antique motorcycles, and have spent many hours working on their prized possessions to prepare them for this event. It becomes quite a challenge trying to guess which ones the judges will pick to win the awards in the various categories; everyone has his own particular favorite. Later on the winners will be announced, and everybody will go on back to their respective motels for some more frivolities and good oldtime motorcycle camaraderie, in preparation for the C.A.M.A. Poker Run on Sunday at 10 AM. Will these old machines start to fall apart in hills? Find out next mon

Steve