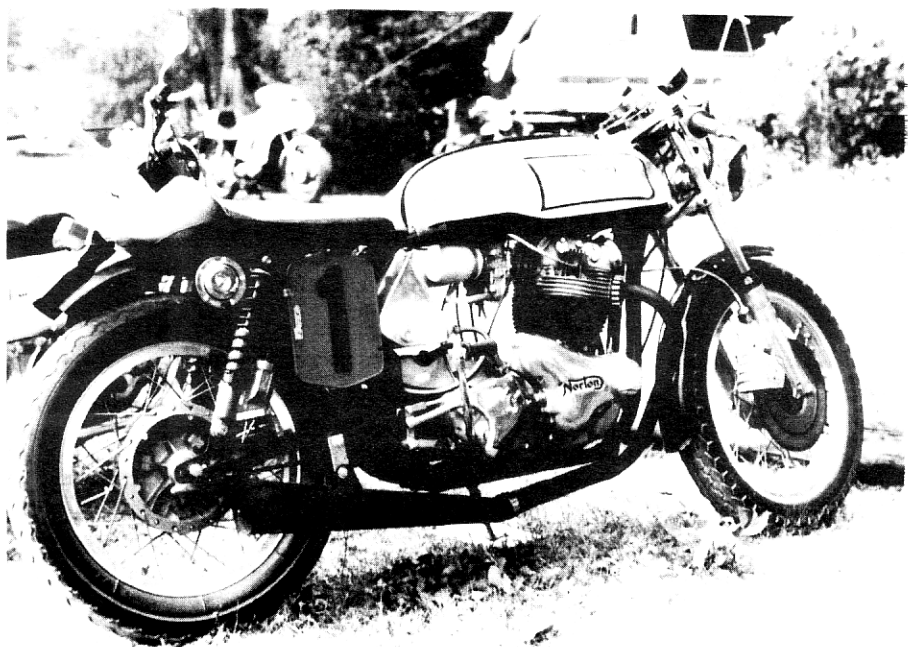


Norton Notice

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH
NORTON OWNERS CLUB

NO. 113

SEPT., 1987



**NINJA
HUNTER**



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH



Norton Notice

is published by the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club. Its 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) as long as it is in good taste, so that other Norton enthusiasts may enjoy it. For Branch members who cannot attend club meetings or club rides, the NORTON NOTICE affords an opportunity to share experiences and information with the membership of the Branch, and to bring the Branch members closer together.

The deadline for items to be submitted for publication is the 15th of each month.

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is available for \$30.00 per year.

Membership dues are payable to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer.

Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, that month being designated by the last number of the individual's membership number as located on the mailing label of the NORTON NOTICE or the membership card. For example, 745/2 denotes member 745 with dues expiring on the 1st of February.

All changes of address should go to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer, not the NOTICE Editor.

Subscription to the NORTON NOTICE only is available for \$18.00 per year. This does not include membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club, nor does it afford any of the rights or privileges of membership in the NOC.

Membership in the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club entitles a member to monthly issues of the NORTON NOTICE and bi-monthly issues of ROADHOLDER magazine, which is sent directly from England, keeping members informed of Norton owners' activities worldwide. Membership provides voting privileges at all NOC and Branch meetings, and allows one to purchase Norton spares directly from England, at significant savings, through the NOC Spares Program.

Cover: A Chicago Norton Club member presented this tasty piece at the USNOA rally in Durango. Dubbed the "Ninja Hunter" it was loud enough to be heard in New Mexico.

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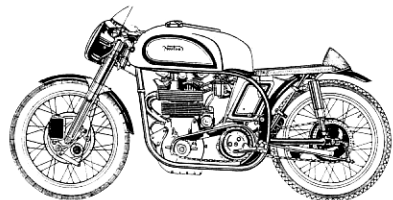
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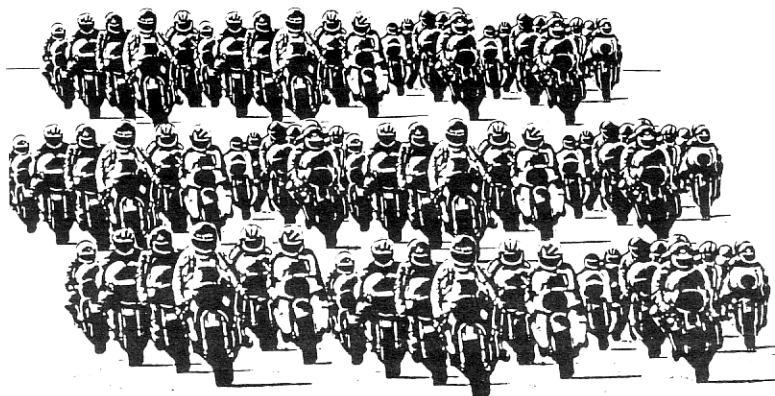
Important!

(Please take note of the following fine print.)

The object of the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage and develop all motor-cycling activities. The Club's members are owners of Norton motorcycles, and they often submit for publication in the Norton Notice technical tips pertaining to motorcycles of the Norton marque. Technical tips so published have been reviewed for technical content and are believed to be both acceptable and workable, but no guarantee is made or implied that they will work correctly, nor is any liability assumed by either the Norton Owners Club or the authors for any problems resulting from use of these technical tips. The Club also assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. Norton Notice articles or other material express the authors' views only and not necessarily the official policy of the Norton Owners Club or its Northern California Branch. The editor reserves the right to accept, reject or alter all editorial and advertising material submitted for publication. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you know.



1963 catalog drawing of Manx 30M and 40M



UPCOMING EVENTS

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 TAKEN OF. IN OTHER WORDS . . . FULL TANKS AND EMPTY BLADDERS!

DATE	DAY	EVENT
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- *Sept. 10 Thurs. **Branch meeting at Zuka's Restaurant, 1 Gilbert St. (across Bryant St. from the Hall of Justice at 7th and Bryant), SF, 7:30 P.M.
- *Sept. 13 Sun. *Ninth Annual British Car and Bike Meet, El Camino Park (across from the Stanford Shopping Center), Palo Alto. Info: (415)566-6103.
- *Sept. 13 Sun. **Schroeder's September Safari. Branch ride to environs around Santa Cruz. Meet at Rabers at 10:00 AM. Lunch will be at the Tyrolean Inn on Hwy 9.
- *Sept. 13 Sun. *AFM races at Sears.
- *Sept. 20 Sun. *San Jose Mile, Santa Clara County Fairgrounds, 344 Tully Rd., S.J. Gates open 9 AM, racing at 2.
- *Sept. 25-27 Fri.-Sun. *Rally Under the Stars IV. Sponsored by the San Diego and So. Cal Norton Owners Clubs. Near Portrero Lake. \$20. camping incl. 2 meals. Info: Sally Stafford, 5469 Caminto Borde, San Diego 92117.
- *Oct. 8 Thurs. **Branch meeting.
- *Oct. 11 Sun. *AFM races at Sears.
- *Oct. 18 Sun. *Dick Mann's Vintage Scrambles, etc., Sand Hill Ranch, Livermore.

SEPTEMBER

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OCTOBER

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25	26	27	28	29	30	31

THE NORTON NEVER
BREAKS VALVES.





TWISTGRIP TWADDLE

I'm fresh back from the 1987 Rally of the Northern California Branch of the NOC, and it was great--I hope you were there. About twenty of you were, not only the usual Bay Area stalwarts but also some Sacramentans and a sizable Nevada contingent. Jim Meadows was there, chaparoned by his lovely daughter Sierra, plus Arlene and Gus from Carson City, veteran motorcyclists more used to BMWs but perhaps developing a taste for Nortons after this weekend. Jim led a ride on Saturday through Monitor Pass to Genoa and the oldest "thirst palace" in Nevada, followed by a detour to Roy's ranch, where a beautifully restored 1948 Indian Chief was properly drooled over. Wish I had a spare \$9,500 lying around.

Saturday night was a feast of barbecued chicken and ribs, courtesy of Burton Kranzel (and transportation by Len Iosty), who unfortunately was unable to attend. This one's for you Burt--crunch. What we cooked for ourselves was easily the best food of the weekend, as the restaurant in Markleeville apparently had changed hands, and the menu (and kitchen) taken a turn for the worse. However, give 'em time; Alpine County strikes me as a good place for NOC rallies. Route 88 is certainly a delightful way to get there: as Louis Mendelowitz remarked, "It's a bit fast." Truth is, he cranked his Norton so hard, the crankcase melted and by the time he got to camp, he was aboard a 180° opposed-twin. But he was smiling.

On behalf of the Branch, I thank the establishments that donated prizes for Saturday evening's raffle: Munroe Motors of San Francisco, Britalia Motors of Soquel, Rabers of San Jose, Phil Radford of Fair Spares/America, Hall-Burdette Motors of Sacramento, and Richmond Blueprint (via Margie) for some interesting publications. Oh, and Jon Bashor, our Public Information Officer, for a prize Union Jack tie. I'm still trying to figure out who got the popcorn seat-cushion. At least it wasn't me.

The ride back was equally good. I flew part of the way, unexpectedly, but my helmet, leather riding jacket and boots proved a serviceable landing gear, and my copilot came back to assist me in regaining my equilibrium afterwards--hats off to Jerry Reynolds of Pacific Grove. No worries; just a bit of skin off each knee and a slight bruise to the starboard tricep, and some cosmetic damage to the bike (and my pride). So who's got a spare tachometer for a Mark III?

Still, a sobering moral: Don't let your desire to keep up with someone else distract you from a sagacious awareness of your own level of skill and familiarity with a particular road. Life's too short already, and no one will think the worse of you if you're not the first one to arrive.

The weather was perfect, as was the company. Shame on you if you don't plan NOW to make next year's rally.

August meeting in San Francisco at Zuka's on Bryant Street. We'll be raffling off one prize that was overlooked at the Rally, that is a \$25 gift

certificate from Rabers. (He gave us two.) Come and have a try.

Once again, at the meeting nominations will be encouraged and accepted for Branch Offices, the election being at the Annual Xmas Meeting in December. Throw your name into the hat--it's easier than you think to be an executive!

Incidentally, it seems that numerous members have not been receiving their bimonthly issues of **The Roadholder**. If you are one such, please let Alan Goldwater know so that he can alert the NOC's U.S. Liaison Officer to get any issues you've missed and to debug the UK mailing list. You pay your dues, you're entitled to receive everything the Club offers.

That's it for this month. See you at Zuka's.

Cheers,

John
Prez.

[The following letter to the editor appeared in the June 24 issue of MCN]

YOU MUST BE KIDDING

Hands up to all those riders who would dearly love to own a 'true Brit' famous-named motorcycle which does not rattle, vibrate, leak oil, or lose parts along the way?

Yes, a real bike, in a league of its own, but competing with foreign superbikes, and used by our own police force.

How many people would I count? A fair percentage I think. But how much is this toy? To you, sir or madam, a mere £5500, that's all!

Who the hell are they kidding? For a home built machine? It's a nice bike and I do like it, but what a price for a name on the tank. Sure, the rotary took a long time to develop, but must the customer repay the costs ASAP just to own one?

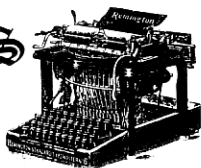
Please, Norton bosses, try to consider us mortals who only earn the bike's price tag in one year and do not do what Lord Hesketh's creation did. I'd love a Norton rotary but it would appear that Norton only want customers worth £15K per annum, because only people with that kind of salary could afford the cost. Please let's not have another example of 'blinker tactics' motivated by greed.

I'm sure that a lot of riders would like one but not at a price which would mean the other essentials of life being ignored. That's too much to ask, isn't it?

B. Love
Harlow, Essex



EDITOR'S NOTES



****Steve Coburn wrote to remind me that Scot wasn't the only Northern Cal Noccer to ride a Nort to the USNOA rally. Steve was there too and won first place in "Best Touring" and second place in "Best Interstate." Come to think of it, I also talked to Dave Kerst and if he rode a Nort that's 3. If you were at the rally send us a note (and any B&W photos if you can) with your impressions, especially if you won an award.

****Art's definition of the Norton Interpol's total-loss lubrication system: If you forget to add oil, it's a total loss.

****We'll be losing our Recording Secretary soon. Tim's on his way to the East Coast to seek fame and fortune as a student there. Good luck and don't forget to pack your woolies.

****Once again a reminder to start thinking about club offices. With elections inching closer by the day it's still early enough to begin your campaign. As in years previous, you're welcome to send a statement to the NOTICE and if you're early enough I'll put a fancy box around it.

Lou

(From American Roadracing, July, '97)

Norton plans to race rotary in 1988

By John Nutting

Norton is planning a stunning Isle of Man TT return to road racing with a team of rotary-powered machines next year!

New company chief Philippe Le Roux is masterminding a no-expense-spared attack on the Mountain circuit with top riders on water-cooled machines which could develop up to 160 bhp!

Said Norton sales manager Steve Sydney, who was at this year's TT to gauge reaction to the twin-rotor prototypes and to promote the company's stock issue. "We wouldn't be considering this unless we thought we could win. But a tuned prototype has produced unbelievable power and this month we start testing a proper racer.

"The hotel and garage accomodation is all booked for the 1988 TT.

"We are just waiting for the ACU to come back with the details of what class the bikes will race in."

Norton's twin-rotor Wankel, which has been under development for 18 years, (initially by BSA-Triumph group and later Norton Villiers Triumph), has powered Interpol 2 machines in use with the police, the armed forces, the AA and RAC for four years with about 200 units being in use. Depending on its classification it can be regarded as either a 600cc or 1200cc engine. For American exhaust emission regulations, it is even viewed as an 1800cc engine.

Even as a 1200cc motor, it would give competitive power for the largest capacity racing classes in the Isle of Man. Brian Crichton, who has ben developing the air-cooled version of the engine, tuned it in his spare time to produce 125 bhp and the company sees no problem in pushing that figure much higher, even to 160 bhp, which, with a weight much less than current 1000cc piston-engined machines, would make it very competitive.

First appearance of the rotary racers will be later this year in smaller events as development progresses.

Norton, however, faces problems with riders, which Philippe Le Roux admitted might cause difficulties. Few riders have experience on rotary-powered machines, with none having been raced. And top-flight riders will need a considerable financial incentive to be attracted to such a bike with no track record. This is despite the involvement of ace development engineer Doug Hele, 67, who in the early 1970s tuned the Triumph triples to race winning competitiveness in the UK and America.

Steve Sydney is confident that the rotary racers will be up to scratch. "We know we have the horsepower, and we know we have the best frame manufacturers in the UK. We could use Spondon, who are near here, for example," he said. Frames would be different from the sheet-steel-spine types used for the road bikes.

Production at the Shenstone, Staffordshire, Norton factory is being geared up and work is starting on the restyling of the air and water-cooled machines. One of the latest styling projects was taken to the Isle of Man to gauge reaction by designer Bob Gardner.

The finished machines will look considerably updated from the prototypes, however, which were made about three years ago. Also involved in the restyling operation is London-based product designers Seymour-Powell, which three years ago carried out an assessment of the design with the result that the project was all but dropped because of the expense of retooling required.

With the new regime, things have changed for the better at Norton and the first fruits of the takeover by properly-based Le Roux will be the appearance on December 20 this year of a touring machine with either an air or water-cooled engine developing about 85 bhp and costing about \$6500.

Early next year a sports model with up to 100 bhp and a weight of as little as 500 pounds looks on the cards.

The last time a works Norton team raced was in 1974 with the ill-fated Cosworth Challenge eight-valve twin.

JOIN UP



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

PARAPHERNALIA

- not in stock*
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 3. " " " " , *dark blue with white print. Large and X large only.* **8.00**
 4. " " " " , white with white print. Large only. **8.00**
 5. Northern California Branch logo T-shirt, white with blue and red print. Small, medium and large. **8.00**
 6. Northern California Branch logo baseball jersey, white with blue and red print. X-large only. **9.50**

NOTE: All T-shirts are \$1.50 postage.

7. Commando Service Notes, 45 pages compiled and printed in England by NOC. **5.00**
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14. 2" " " " **1.50**
15. red enamel NOC lapel pin **1.25**
16. " " " key fob **1.50**
17. red, white, and blue enamel John Player Norton lapel pin **1.50**
18. " " " key fob **1.75**

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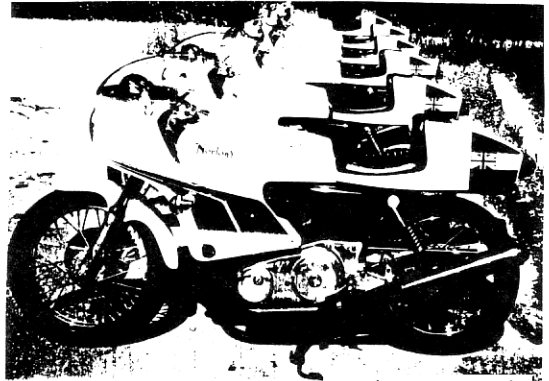
Call or write for details concerning availability and postage of items.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH TOOL LOAN-OUT PROGRAM

Get in touch with Harry Bunting if you need one or more of the following tools for working on your Commando. A refundable deposit equal to the replacement cost of the tool is required at the time you pick it up.

TOOL	DEPOSIT
exhaust lock ring tool.....	\$10
timing cover oil seal guide.....	5
clutch spring compressor.....	12
clutch locking tool.....	18
valve spring compressor.....	25
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crankshaft sprocket puller.....	12
timing pinion puller.....	20
gearbox layshaft bearing extractor..	15

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(Coburn photo)

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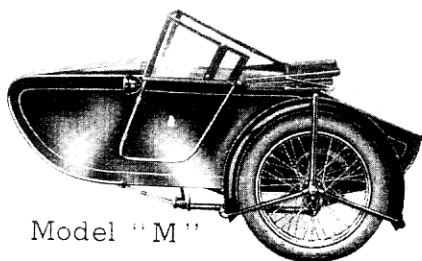


ALL ADS WILL RUN FOR TWO MONTHS UNLESS YOU RESUBMIT THEM IN WRITING TO THE EDITOR.

WANTED:

1. MKIII handlebar switches, mirrors, front master cylinder, brake reservoir.
 2. Brake and clutch levers and brackets.
 3. MKIII rear brake master cylinder and linkage (ie., foot pedal pushrod, etc.)
 4. Stock ignition switch wiring for idiot lights.
 5. 750 type pipes and 750 reverse cone mufflers (good shape, please).
 6. 1/4 fairing, Dunstall type.
- Any of the above deeply appreciated-- I'm trying to finish a gorgeous MKIII. Thanks!

Doug Ratliff
2104 Crane Ct.
Sacramento 95825



Model "M"



**WE NEED
YOUR
BIKES**

FOR SALE

1. 1970 BSA 441 Victor Special. 95% restored (honest!). \$700 or best.
2. Teardrop style gas tank for Commando (not a Highrider tank). \$10.
3. Norton-Lockheed caliper. \$15.

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1. Fastback Long Range gas tank.
 2. Timing cover type tach drive.
 3. Fork slider w/caliper lugs.
- Must be reasonable (Cheap would be nice.)

Shane Harvey
Waukegan, IL
(312)249-4823
(mornings)

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1. Norvil header pipes. New. \$50.
2. MKIII Rear disc assembly. Wheel-hub, disc, calipers, master, swingarm. Complete. \$175.
3. MKIII Crank and cases. Perfect. \$175.
4. MKIII Primary chaincase. \$50.

Chris Nichols
(415)965-4611

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Craig Feder
69 Biuxome
SF, CA 94107

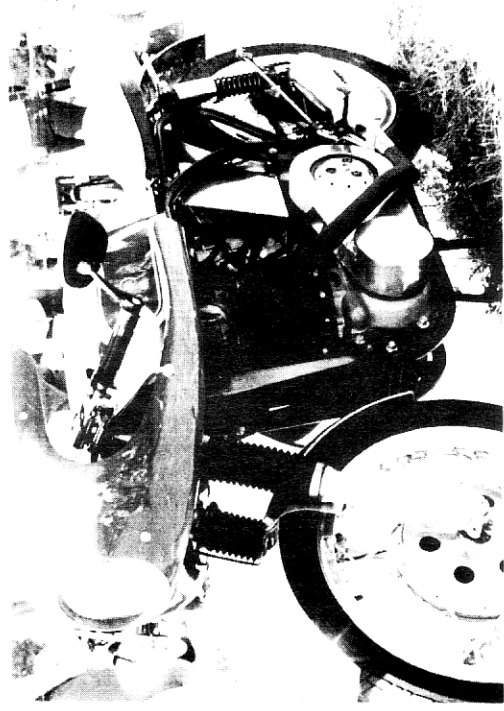
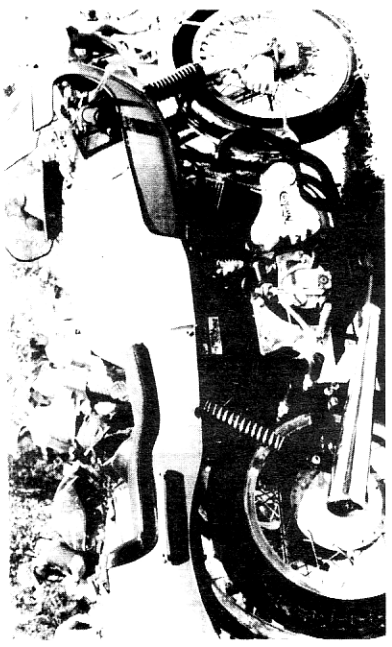
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Oil cooler. Black finish. Used, very good cond. \$40/obo.

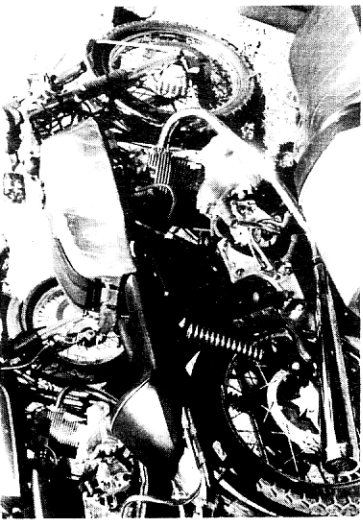
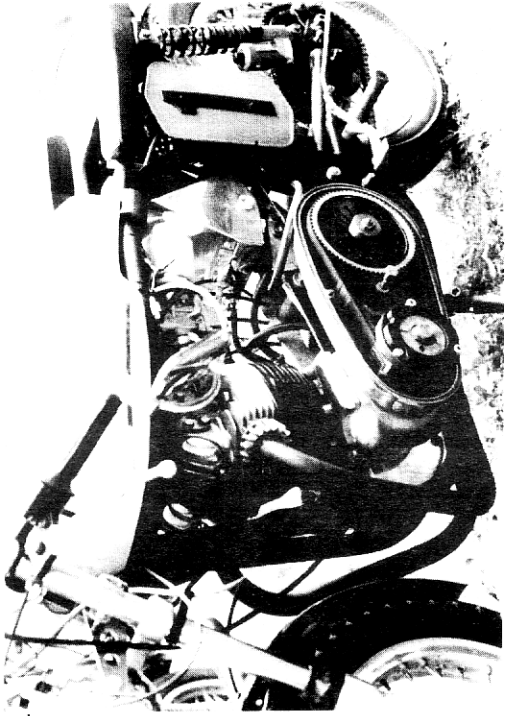
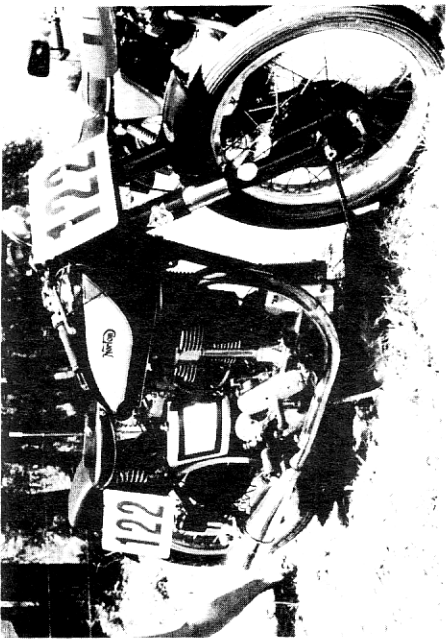
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NORTON OWNERS CLUB



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TECH TALK

The Discussion Continues. . . .

Mike: I think the two things that the average owner screws around with the most are ignition and carburetion.

Phil: I think ignition is pretty well covered now with the electronics you can get. Boyer and Lucas, I think you're pretty safe with either.

Mike: I sure get a lot more complaints about Boyer than I do about Lucas. [Mike probably sells more Boyers, too.--SJM]

Phil: The Lucas is a whole lot more expensive.

Mike: Yes, but it seems to be a whole lot more reliable too.

Harvey: I haven't had any trouble but I've heard more about problems with Boyer.

Mike: Well, probably about five to one. And the problems I run into are things like black box failure, pickup failure.

Harvey: High rpm miss in the Boyer or hard starting.

Phil: Well, Boyers do give a five year guarantee [They always have!--SJM] now and they're very good on their warranty work. I sell them for about \$70; I can retail the Lucas for about \$120. The Lucas is a more substantially made unit but then you pay for it.

Harvey: I knew a guy once who had trouble with his Boyer because he bolted it to his head.

Phil: Hal Taped it to his sparkplug!

Burton: I have come across Boyers where the black box has cracked where the leads pass through the epoxy. Silicone adhesive seems to fill the hole.

Mike: One of the nice things about the Lucas is that the amplifier isn't potted [epoxied]. You can get into the internals and I've seen some failures where I've been able to go in with a soldering iron and fix them.

Harvey: I think anybody who's got a worn out auto advance ought to just chuck that thing, and that includes every Norton on the road, and just go to an electronic system.

Mike: Hell, yes. The price of an auto advance unit now is probably a hundred bucks!

Phil: You can buy an electronic unit and keep your points in your toolkit. Your battery has to be good. If you've got a low battery or a battery lead break that acts like you've got no battery then it'll keep your ignition on full advance. When you start it, it'll kick you back.

Harvey: You bet. I'd knock the heel off my boot before I'd run Ol' Reliable without a battery.

Phil: A friend of mine just had the same thing. His battery lead broke, the wire from the fuse, and he broke his leg, his femur. It just snapped back and kicked him. I actually rebuilt the bike for him.

Harvey: Part of the circuit on the Boyer is such that as the voltage drops, like when the idle starts to drop on your bike, the Boyer advances. [Advance on the Boyer is purely a function of engine RPM, not alternator output, as Harvey suggests.--SJM] Your bike speeds up a little bit. So it's self regulated and finds a stable position. It's kind of a neat system but it means that you have to have a fairly full charge at first. On Ol' Reliable I put a switch between the capacitor and the Boyer and I put a bigger capacitor in. They come with about a 500 microfarad capacitor, so I put a 1000 microfarad one in. I kick it over twice to fill the capacitor and then I switch it on, kick it again, and it'll start without backfiring. You just use the capacitor as a temporary charged storage device and then the voltage is enough to start the bike. The 500 microfarad is about right unless you don't have a battery. Then you can take the capacitor out of the system really. But it's kind of nice to run without a battery.

Phil: I really don't think ignition is a problem these days with the electronics we can get.

Harvey: Yes, if you did just one thing to a stock Norton it should be replacing the points with an electronic system.

Phil: Most of the warranty work on the Boyer has to do with the unit itself but with dirty connections. They've got to be clean and tight.

Harvey: So what's the next best thing you can do to your Norton to improve reliability and performance?

Phil: Get your carburetors fixed. I like the Amals. They're simple, you can get parts for them relatively cheaply and you can get them to work. They wear out-- that's the problem.

Harvey: They wear out because they're bolted solidly to the head.

Phil: Not just because of that. But also because the slide and the body are the same material. They wear each other out.

Harvey: I think it's mostly because they're banging around.

Phil: They're not made that great to start with. A new Amal has a certain amount of leeway in it.

Mike: I've always wanted to try spraying them with Gunkote (KalGard product). Ever heard of that? I talked to someone who tried it and he claimed it worked really well. You spray the slides and bake them. They make a piston coat stuff too. Apparently two-stroke people use it.

Burton: That's definitely the problem with the Amal; after the body wears the slides just kind of slap around.

Phil: I've got a service now where I get your old Amals rebored and resleeved in steel.

Harvey: Is it actually less expensive than buying a new carb body?



TECH TALK CONTINUED

Phil: It's about the same price as a new body and slide but lasts longer and is a better fit of body and slide.

Burton: But now you have a new slide.

Phil: Yes, now you've got a steel slide going up and down. The slide is sleeved. You can't sleeve the body but the body is rebored. The sleeve is matched to the bore so you've got a fit better than new. [Sounds like the steel slide on the zinc body would worsen the wear problem.--SJM] It's \$95 for two carbs.

Mike: That's a good deal. What's the turnaround time? Phil: About one to two weeks. I send them away. It's only for concentrics.

Mike: One thing I've run into with Nortons is distorted carb bodies.

Burton: It's pretty easy to overtighten them on the MKill because it's hard to get to the inside bolts. I have had the problem of putting new bodies on, tightening, and having the slides hang up. You have to start again so as not to distort things. Another thing is that if you put velocity stacks on the body is very thin at the top on the inlet so if you overtighten the setscrew you squash the body. You literally bend the body. Whereas on the bottom it's a three setscrew pattern, if you get the Amal stacks, and the two bottom screws push against the body where it's quite thick. Clearly what Amal has in mind when you look at the length of the setscrews is that when the setscrews are properly tightened they are just flush with the rim on the edge of the stack.

Harvey: I had a lot of trouble keeping those velocity stacks on. They would always vibrate off the bike we were racing.

Burton: You can machine out the inside area of the end of the velocity stack, screw that insert in that's normally used for the air cleaners and then drill a little pocket in that so the setscrews go into the pocket.

Mike: And then spray it with Loctite!

Burton: You get a lot more low and midrange torque with velocity stacks. It's impressive.

Harvey: You should have to richen up the carbs a little bit.

Burton: Yes, and I went one jet size bigger. I went to a #3 slide but that just didn't do the trick. #3 1/2 slide and one or two jet sizes bigger seems about right.

Harvey: There are several kinds of velocity stacks. By far the best are the Amals, the ones with the separate plate up front and then the smaller hole with the stack coming back.

Burton: Yes, and they're nicely made. I'd like to find some screens for them, though.

Harvey: By the way, I mentioned Mikunis a while ago and everybody went, "Booo." Do people not like Mikunis just because they say "Made In Japan" on the side?

Burton: I don't like them simply because of that. It irritated me to have a Japanese carburetor on my British motorcycle. When I bought my bike it had a single 38mm Mikuni and it ran like a bomb. It didn't have the top end of the twin Amals but off the line the bottom end and midrange were responsive to the twistgrip.

Phil: The Mikuni works well if it's dialed in. If it's not, then you've got problems. Have you ever seen a Mikuni parts book? Pages and pages. . . . I went to Rabers once because I wanted to jet up a Mikuni on my Beezer and he kind of looked at me. . . . There was one whole page of just jets.

Mike: On the Amals you've got a 105, a 106, and a 107 needle jets.

Phil: And there are about eight different types of Mikunis!

Harvey: I had a single Mikuni on Ol' Reliable for a long time and I have dual 34s on there now. With the single I was getting 55mpg at 70mph with super easy starting and good midrange, light throttle, but it just didn't have the power to keep up with Gene Austin and a couple others on high speed runs. [That's one way of handicapping him!--GA]

Phil: I had a single Mikuni on my 850 and I had plenty of problems. You'd turn on the gas and it would flood, and then you'd ride it and it would flood. And I've heard of slides sticking also. They're not foolproof. [Every single 34mm or 36mm Mikuni I've ever seen on a Commando sticks the slide open in cool, moist weather. I could name at least four others.--SJM]

Burton: I've never had any trouble with mine. I just got irritated with the fact that they're Japanese.

Mike: Isn't there some sort of problem with air cleaners on the twin setup?

Harvey: There's that sheet metal brace on the backbone tube. They hit up against that brace. But I used the old socks, the foam socks with the spring inside. You can't put K&Ns on. K&N says they do and I bought a set from the factory but they wouldn't fit. [I had K&N filters on a twin Mikuni setup for years. Biggest problem with the twin Mikuni is that the adjusting screws are on both sides of the carb body, making carb tuning a real pain in the butt.--SJM]

Phil: I think it was Lee Steinmetz who said that the best setup you can get is a pair of Dell'Orto, if you can get them dialed in.

Mike: They're beautiful! But you have to make manifolds up. . . . There was a guy who used to come in to TT who had a single Dell'Orto.



TECH TALK CONTINUED

Harvey: Tires and shocks. How about tires and shocks?

Harvey: How about these new Metzlers?

Burton: I've been using Roadrunners for years. The first set of tires I had on the bike were K81s, then I bought another set of those and they were okay and then I shopped around for something new-- I like to spread my business around. I called Brian Stark and he said Roadrunners were absolutely the best tires for the money. They're going to track the rain grooves more but you'll love the handling. So I bought them and ever since then I've been buying them. They wear out faster but you can't tell the difference between the wet and the dry. They sure are sticky. [K81s have more stick than Avons, also shorter life.--SJM]

Harvey: What are you guys recommending at the shop for Nortons these days, Mike?

Mike: Well Marshall has been getting new K81s. They retail for about \$80 whereas the Roadrunners go for about \$65.

Lou: How many miles do you get on a rear tire?

Burton: Probably between 6-7,000. But at about 4-5,000 it loses its round profile. [Yes, that does happen if you don't lean the bike while cornering.--GA]

Phil: Gee, I got 50,000 out of my truck tires.

Burton: I sat down once with all my receipts and figured out the average cost and to ride a Norton and do one 2-3-4,000 miles trip per year costs about \$200 per month including tires, batteries, oil... [This is 'cause Burt takes his bike completely apart every 800 miles.--MR]

Mike: Lou, whatever you do don't put THAT in the NOTICE!

Harvey: It depends on how you ride. I spend a hell of a lot less than that. I make money. [Now where have I heard that before!--PR]

Phil: Nortons are a complete waste of money if you're looking at it from an economic point of view. It's a fun toy! It's what I get my jollies out of! [I thought you were married, Phil!--GA] I even put 15 octane race gas in it. Makes a cheap smile. I get a lot of fun out of this.

Burton: I look at it that anytime I can open up a throttle and blast from 40 to 80 or 90 it's worth whatever I had to invest in the bike.

Harvey: Hey, what is the real concern with running tires that are three or four years old? That are just a little bit oxidized? I've run them in and they seem to hold the road just as well as a new tire. Am I missing something? [Until that oxide skin is worn off, the tires are quite slippery. Also, unless stored

properly, the carcass and cords may rot, damage that isn't visible from the outside of the tire.--SJM]

Phil: Dunno.

Burton: Does Marshall have those 3.60 K81s?

Harvey: That's what Norton recommended on the Production Racer. I tried that on some of the Sunday Morning Rides down from Alice's and I just about killed myself on that one long straight by the red barn, right before you turn right where the surface is a little bumpy. That skinny tire was just sliding along the surface; there just wasn't enough rubber on the road to get stopped. That brake is so good. I couldn't get stopped as well as I could with my normal Norton with standard disc and 4.10 section front end. I put the 4.10 tire on that evening and the next weekend trying it it worked just fine. [3.60 was used for improved handling, not better braking.--SJM]

Mike: You can't fit a 4.10 on some front ends.

Harvey: That's right. You have to bend the fender stays out so it'll clear. [Fiberglass fenders must be cut away for adequate clearance.--SJM]

Lou: What's the maximum size on the rear?

Burton: The second bike I bought had a 4.50x18 Sport Elite on the back. It clears everything, not by a lot. [4.50 won't clear, but 4.25 will (by 1/4 inch each side)--SJM]

[Tape ends. Discussion resumes about shocks.]

Mike: Fox shocks won't fit on a MKIII. They work real well on other Nortons but I know from having tried to install them on a MKIII that there's no way you can fit them without fouling something.

Burton: I bought another set of Girlings. For my level of riding the Girling seems to be a perfectly adequate shock if it's in good shape.

Harvey: They work just fine except they wear out quickly.

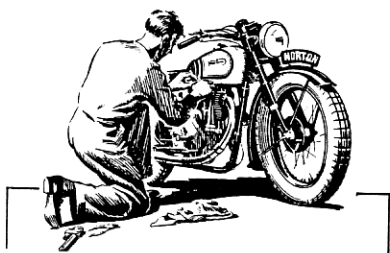
Burton: I put 110 pound/inch springs on mine and for my size and weight they're perfect.

Harvey: The springs Norton put on the rear were a compromise, a compromise toward a heavier load-- two up or camping sorts of things-- so they put a heavier spring, a 126, and it's heavier than what you need for solo riding. So for solo riding you need to have it on the lowest preload all the time or, better yet, put a 90/110 dual rate spring on. For an average sized guy it works a lot better. You get a supple rear end and the wheel follows the road better, rather than bouncing along. That way the damping and the springing are working together.

Phil: A lot of people suffer from a worn swingarm and don't know it. It's the Achilles heel of the Norton.

Mike: Putting a grease nipple on there without some sort of warning was the stupidest

(Cont. p. 13)



TECH TIPS

TECH TALK CONTINUED

Burton: I found that there's nothing difficult about repairing the swingarm. [The MKIII swingarm pivot is fixed by cotter; it won't loosen up.--SJM]

Phil: On all pre MKIIIs the swingarm is a problem.

Harvey: You have two tapered cotter pins that go down and lock the spindle in place and you don't have that on the earlier ones.

Phil: You can forget the swingarm on the MKIII-- it doesn't give you problems. On the earlier ones the spindle tube in the transmission cradle ovals out. No new parts will get the wear out of that cradle. And to fix it you've got to yank that cradle out which is time consuming. You can put an oversize spindle in, they're available from me. I ream them out with an adjustable reamer, a little bit at a time and then you can fit the .005" oversize spindle in. You can use your old bushings.

Mike: That's a great idea!

Phil: Which brings you back to square one when an oversize spindle is fitted. Because then IT wears. And then you've got to do something a little more radical. I weld nuts on the tube, drill through, tap it and put allen setscrews to hold the spindle in place. It can't be done very well on the bike unless you're an A-1 welder.

Harvey: There's another way to do it which is the Gene Austin fix where you don't have to do any welding. You tap the spindle.

Phil: That is hard. You've got to have a carbide drill. And a diamond tap! I've also heard of putting U-bolts on the tube and crimp it. That's a cheap way. [False. The spindle is only case hardened. Grind off 0.030" of metal where you want to drill and tap.--SJM]

Harvey: The tube is pretty thin and if you just crunch it....

Mike: Pretty crude but....

Harvey: It works! I've got some Triumph handlebar clamps which are real sturdy cast jobs and I bored them out so they're just a little bit undersized from the tube that goes in the cradle and I want them to

collapse the tube at four different places down around the spindle. I think that will lock it in place pretty well. [Untried and, probably, untrue.--SJM] I just haven't gotten around to doing it yet.

Lou: How long is it before the cradle begins to show significant wear?

Phil: It depends how often the swingarm is lubricated. If it's pumped with grease then it doesn't last too long. The grease solidifies and then the drain holes in the spindle don't get anything going through them.

It's just like the whole thing runs dry then.

Mike: Water probably works better!

Phil: Yeah, it's a fluid!

Harvey: I don't think the spindle ovaling the cradle is related to lubrication at all.

Phil: That can also be true.

Harvey: If the rear wheel is out of round that will lead to wear in the swingarm. And the chain is pulling to one side trying to torque it over....

Phil: Yes, as the wheel flexes and the bike turns whatever clearance was in there to begin with from the factory will just get worse. On the last ride to Mt. Hamilton Claude Wright was the last one in and he said the bike was handling like a pig. And he had his daughter on the back. And we grabbed his back wheel and there was an enormous amount of play and I said, "There's your problem." That and the front isolastics.

Harvey: Phil cleaned that up and Claude said he could not believe the transformation. He fell in love with his Norton all over again.

Mike: What about the top isolastic mount? I know Lee fitted one and he said he liked it.

Phil: If you are racing it's a must. The Norvil head steady. It's adjustable with shims. And it's easy to install.

Harvey: You feel a little more vibration but they keep your isolastics from loosening up.

[My experience with the reproduction Norvil isolastic head steady is not consistent with Harvey's. When received, I could not get any space between the PTFE washer and the inner cup, even with all the shims removed. This was corrected by re-machining the main housing of the head steady to make it shorter. The head steady is shimmed just like the rear isolastic mount (takes same size shims, too). Vibration was slightly increased, but there was no improvement in handling (At least, none that I could notice). Adjustment intervals for the other two isolastic mounts remained the same, and wear on the PTFE washers was about the same. I've used it for about 30,000 miles and have returned to the original rubber muffler mounts with no noticeable change in handling, but with less vibration.--SJM]



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

[For the ultimate swingarm fix, fit the cradle that Fair Spares sells. It uses the MKIII tapered cotter pins to secure the swingarm spindle, and the cradle will still fit the MKII engine and tranny. Fair Spares also make a tapered roller bearing swingarm replacement that removes any problem with the bushing lubrication on the stock setup. I have been running both of these items for the last 16,000 miles with no trouble.--SJM]

Harvey: Let's try another topic. How do you keep things from leaking?

Burton: I use RTV, lots of it. [Bad tip.--PR] Flattening things helps a lot.

Burton: Like sanding valve covers flat, smoothing out the primary cover on a sheet of glass....

Harvey: Mike, you rebuild things all the time. What do you do to keep the oil inside?

Mike: My favorite gasket goop is that Loctite Master Gasket.

Harvey: How about the 3-4 bond, or something like that-- that silver goop from Japan. [3-4 bond works as well as most sealant and, in my experience, much, much better than any silicon based sealers. If the mating surfaces of the parts being joined are truly flat and free of scratches, no sealant is necessary. Just rub a little engine oil on the gasket before assembly.--SJM]

Phil: It's expensive.

Mike: I'll tell you, it's a lot harder to make Triumphs oil tight because of the pushrod tubes and all that crap. But that Loctite stuff is really good.

Harvey: Loctite Master Gasket never really sets up hard, does it? It gets firm but it's still a little pliable.

Mike: It's like Burt says-- get it flat.

Harvey: Do you use all the gaskets that Norton recommends or do you get rid of some of them?

Mike: From Lee's experience you can do away with the base gasket.

Burton: I don't use a primary cover gasket.

Mike: On a MKIII you can probably get away with that.

Harvey: And I don't use a gasket between the inner primary cover and the crankcase either.

Mike: And then there's the real hard one-- making a pre-Commando primary oil tight. Let's talk about some challenges!

Phil: You've got to get the arc welder out there.

Harvey: No, you can do it but you have to use grease inside the crankcase on the Atlas style. That's what I use. And make sure the outer cover is not distorted. You cannot just push in the screw without taking your feet or a rubber mallet and pushing in gently.

Phil: I've got my Atlas sealed up tight and I never ever want to take that cover off again.

Mike: That's the problem. You don't want to do anything to the clutch....

Phil: It'll have to slip until I can't go any further. And then I'll take it off. Now it doesn't leak a drop of oil but I don't know how I did it.

Burton: I finally got my MKIII oiltight and now the head gasket is moving around. There's no hope.

Harvey: I think you've got to use a little RTV, a thin line, around the pushrod tubes and that seems to keep it from weeping.

Phil: One material I haven't had any success with at all is that Hylomar Blue. [No luck with it either.--SJM]

It's touted as recommended by Rolls Royce. [It's actually manufactured under license from Rolls Royce to their specifications.--GA] I used it on the base gasket of my 850 but it was leaking like a sieve afterwards.

Burton: The stuff Mike was talking about really does work. But anywhere you're going to have a bolt passing through a gasket into a hole, the primary cover for example, you've got to grease the bolts. The bolts pick the stuff up on the way in and then it hardens on the threads and I've had trouble getting them out and I've actually broken my bolt off.

Harvey: I've seen things like timing side covers where people have gooped up RTV especially on it and they'll stick a few bolts in and maybe tighten them down before putting the others in and that sort of squishes the RTV in the remaining holes, then they'll put the remaining screws in and tighten them down with a big slug of RTV in front of the screws. That'll even break the aluminum sometimes.

Mike: Actually I think people should be warned against using that crap because it can get loose in your engine and block oil passages. [Especially on the cylinder head!--SJM]

Phil: You don't need much at all, just a thin smear.

Burton: What I do is check the holes then take a Q-tip and stick in some white cup grease.

Harvey: That takes a lot of extra time.

Burton: Yeah, but it's worth it. As soon as you break the bolts loose they come right out.

Mike: Teflon tape. People use it on drain plugs. Or the liquid Teflon.

Harvey: As a seal....

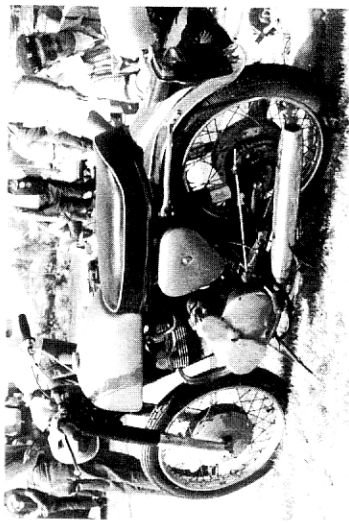
Mike: And it makes them easier to get out.

Phil: How about chains?

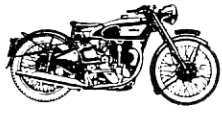
Burton: Renolds is the only one I like.

Phil: Don't put an industrial chain on your bike. It doesn't work well at all. Industrial Diamond chain or Acme.... It isn't made for the application at all, for the stress, the heat, and the amount of pressure going through it. It breaks up real quick. I had a customer with a 750 and some rollers were missing. The split roller had come off the pin.

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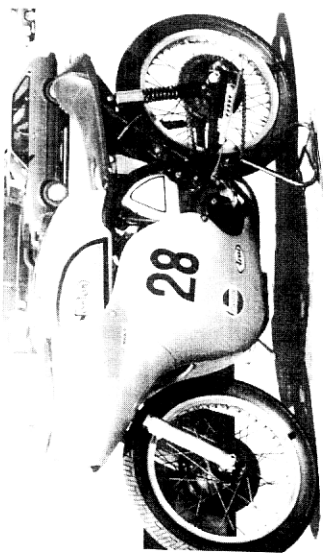
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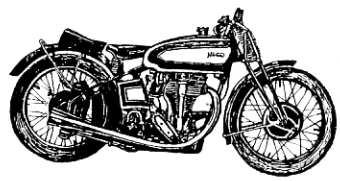


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