



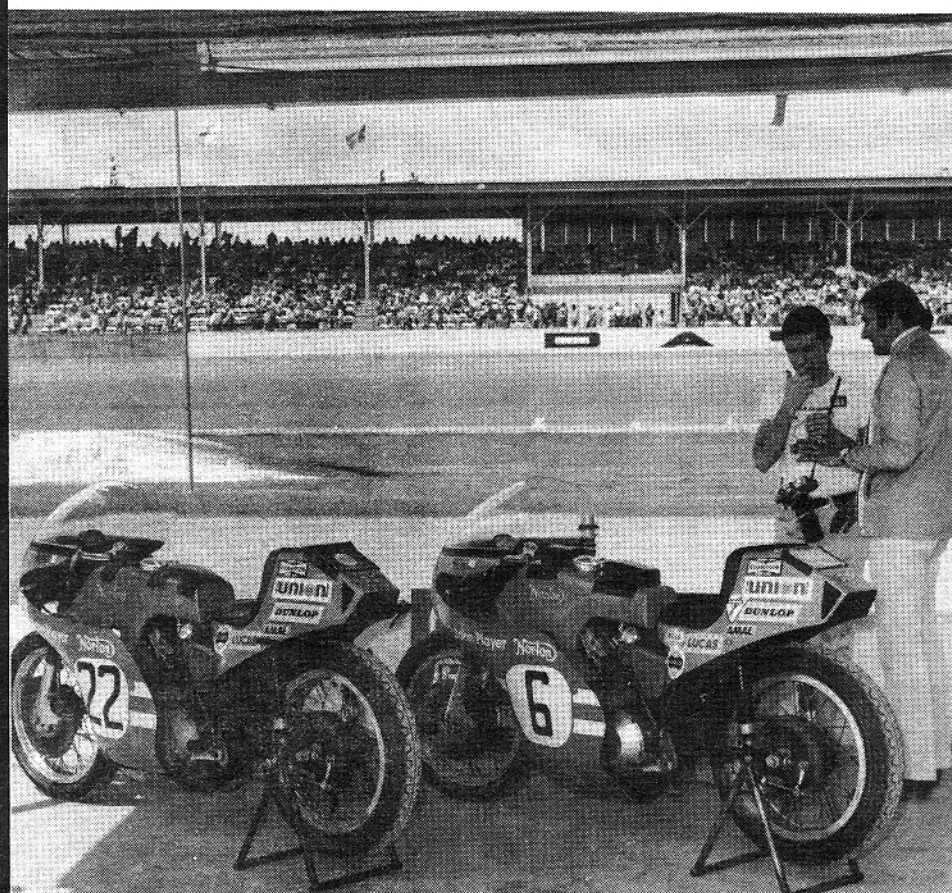
# Norton Notice



The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club

No. 138

Oct. 1989



1972 John Player Nortons at rest at Daytona.  
Team manager Frank Perris is the chap on the right.

(Photo provided by Art Sirota)



# The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club



## 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  
- \$10.50 (pounds sterling) + \$18.00

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 \$10.00 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.

### \* CLUB OFFICERS \*

#### PRESIDENT-EDITOR

Alan Goldwater  
1780 Chanticleer Ave  
Santa Cruz, Ca 95062  
(408) 475-7505

#### V.P./RIDES

Margie Siegal  
625 Fairmount Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94611  
(415) 654-1933

#### SEC/TREASURER

Harry Bunting  
1165 Crandano Ct  
Sunnyvale, Ca 94087  
(408) 736-6492

#### RECORDING SEC

Art Sirota  
1281 Laurel Street  
Menlo Park, Ca 94025  
(415) 327-3167

#### NOTICE PUBLISHER

Marick Payton  
301 West O'Connor  
Menlo Park, Ca 94025  
(415) 321-5083

#### PARAPHERNALIA

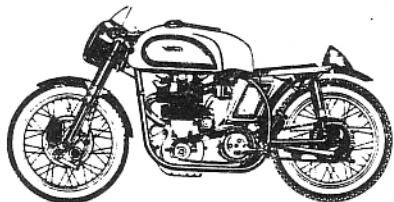
Robert Briscoe  
3232 Balboa Street  
San Francisco, CA 94121  
(415) 387-5593

## NORTON OWNERS CLUB

#### 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 motorcycling 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

### Club Rides

**October 15:** Ride to Dick Mann Rally and Swap meet. Leave TT Motors in Berkeley at 9 am. Call Marick Payton (415) 321-5083 for details. (Santa Clara wine country ride postponed.)

**Need ride leaders for November and December. Call Margie (415) 654-1933 before she calls you.**

### NOC CLASSIC CALENDAR

#### 15-full color photos

**\$9.50** for members of both  
local and British NOC

**\$10.50** for the rest of us.

Contact Harry Bunting

(408) 736-6492

1165 Crandano Ct.  
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

### Meeting Schedule

**October 12 San Francisco**  
Lake Merced Boathouse. Directions -- from East Bay: cross Bay Bridge. US 101 south to I-280 south. Exit at Ocean. West to 20th Ave., left 1 block to Sloat. Left (west) to Skyline. 1/2 mile south to hardley Dr. It's a left turn. Park. From North Bay: come south on 19th Ave., turn right on Sloat, proceed as above. From South Bay: come north on I-280. Take 19th Ave. exit left on Sloat (somehow) and proceed as above.

**November 9 San Mateo**  
Prince of Wales

**December 14 Mountain View**  
Harry's Hofbrau (XMAS PARTY)

### Sept. Minutes

(Reported by Art Sirota)

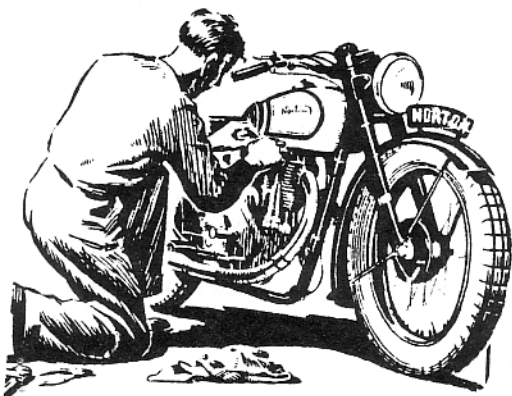
Eighteen members were present at the Emery Pub when Alan called the meeting to order at 8:25 pm.

The upcoming NOC Christmas/Hanukaparty/annual general meeting was brought up for discussion and it was decided to hold it on Friday, the 15th of December at Harry's Hofbrau in Mountain View. Once again Harry

(continued on page 10)

# Alan's Wrench

## Tech Tips and Gossip from the Editor



First, some business. Don Dannmeier sent in the following letter:

28 Sept., 1989

Dear Norton Notice,

A year ago I invited a friend of mine to accompany Shirly and I on the NOC Marin County ride. He rolled out his Ariel and waited with us at Lucas Valley Road until 11 Am, at which time we gave up on the scheduled ride and created one of our own (we later learned that the riders that did show up had appeared just after we'd left; one of them had brake trouble, but they did make it). I'd forgotten about that ride until this year, when the same thing happened. One Norton and one Ariel

waited at the Bridge until frustration got the better of us. Breakfast at Point Reyes station never tasted so good, because I'd never tried it so late in the day.

Another annoyance crept into my life when the Rally this year was scheduled to coincide with what had previously been planned as a joint ride with the BSAOC. In other words, I couldn't do both, what with the NOC gig occurring at Grover Hot Springs. The final frustration, and the one that prompted me to put my grumbles into print, was finding that the October ride is scheduled to coincide with the Dick Mann event in Brentwood.

Now I wonder whether any of this has any bearing on Harry's statement last month that membership has "slipped a bit, to about 150..." Seems to me that this outfit was considerably stronger than that as little as a year or two ago. I think **SOMETHING IS WRONG** and perhaps our members out there will permit a few suggestions:

- 1) Establish the ride schedule earlier. Waiting to set up venues etc. only a month or two in advance may not provide enough lead time for those planning their fun around things other than the NOC.
- 2) Watch the other newsletters that the NOC gets in the mail. Mutual avoidance of scheduling conflicts is one of the primary reasons for newsletter exchange. For example, the BSA chili cookoff was scheduled a year in advance, and was subsequently published in the BSA newsletter month monthly since February.

The Dick Mann dirt bike rally, an annual event, has been touted all over the Bay Area for months.

3) I guess typos are inevitable, but whether the Sept. ride was the 9th (as published) or the 10th (as Lynn Miller intended), it probably didn't matter much. I hear three riders showed up on Sunday. Or was it really a typo? Maybe our esteemed Pres is being asked to handle too many tasks. Try getting someone to proofread the Notice before it goes to press, other than the person(s) who typed it in.

4) Promote the club rides and events. One skinny announcement in the Notice a month before the event might be missed. Hit us over the head with bolder pronouncements; same with meetings (but rides are more fun and deserve higher priority). Ya gotta advertise. Be obnoxious.

What we have here is a motorcycle club, the whole point of which is riding. Unless, of course, you'd rather behave a little more like Art Sirota's description of the Chrysler Owners Club.

Don Dannmeier

OK Don, lets handle these issues in order. First, the ride schedule last month was definitely an Editorial snafu. I sincerely appologise to Lynn Miller for the slip-up and poor turn-out that resulted. I got the details over the phone at the last minute and didn't check the calendar. The club ride is (virtually) always on a Sunday and if not so, is well and fully noted as otherwise. In fact, an announcement was made at the meeting last month (which you attended) of the ride schedule. Nevertheless, more careful proof reading

of the Notice might have caught the error, if there had been a formal schedule to check against. (more on this later).

Second, chili cookoff was in fact part of the NOC rally and so you were there. The choice of time and venue were made over the course of several meetings and the relative distance of the rally campsite to the BSA venue (about 60 miles) was not thought to be a problem. The swapmeet site in Minden, being about halfway between was a convenient meet-up point for Saturday. I think the fly in this ointment is that many of the BSA folks didn't leave until Saturday morning and therefore missed the swap. We invited them to a pancake breakfast on Sunday, followed by a joint ride home over Highway 4, but since those of them that didn't ride Nortons left their trucks in Nevada City, they had to go back that way instead.

As far as the conflict with the Dick Mann event (which covers two weekends), Marick is aware of the problem and is adjusting his ride schedule accordingly.

Now, to the real meat of the issue: HELP! Yes, I am being asked to handle too many tasks. Someone please help me by taking over the calendar/event preparation. This is an important part of the Notice, which I've been neglecting lately due to work overload and communication breakdown. It's simply too much for me to organise given my current work schedule. We were plagued this year with bad weather on several scheduled rides, and so this too is an issue which needs consideration. Alternate dates and willingness by a designated ride leader to answer the phone on the ride day in case of doubtful weather are a must.

Hear's another letter, this one from Jim Noll of the USNOA (updated by telephone 10/4):

"Please start sending in those petitions (*the one requesting the AMA to change their rules concerning rotary race bikes.*) I know some of you have already sent them to me, but most of you have not. Please do it as soon as you can.

"Hot news from England. I talked with Phillip LeRoux (Chairman of Norton) on Sept. 4th. He told me that Steve Spray was leading the British Formula 1 series and has won the Supercup championship.

"Mr Le Roux also informed me that they are planning to have 200 P55 race-bike replicas built in time for next years World Superbike races if they are held again in the US. This past season they were at Brainard, Minnesota and Mosport, Ontario Canada. These are F.I.M. events and are not subject to AMA rules.

"If you want to see the Norton race in the Pro Twins races elsewhere in the U.S., especially at Daytona, we will have to get the AMA to change the rules. Otherwise the only two places where you might see the Norton race are in Minnesota and Canada."

The "current" (July/August) issue of the Roadholder is the best I've seen for a long time. It has several articles about the Interpol and Commander rotaries as well as an interview with David O'Neill, sales manager of Norton. Mr. O'Neills opinion differs from that of his boss in that he doesn't feel that the required 200 P-55 racebike replicas can be built by next spring. Since the alloy frames are being built in Italy, this may well be the limiting

factor, as the engine is pretty much like the Commander production water-cooled unit. He also says that the factory has decided not to produce complete Commandos but that all mechanical parts are available and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

Now on to the fun stuff. As you know by now, I bought a Norton Interpol II rotary this summer, and brought it back from Europe with me. I found that the one-time personal EPA exemption for direct import was terminated on December 1, 1988, and that the only way to get the bike through US Customs was to apply for EPA certification. According to EPA, no individual has ever successfully pursued this path, but I wouldn't let that stop me, so I sent in the required paperwork to start the process.

I soon discovered that EPA certification is not a trivial process (no surprise there) but is nevertheless possible, given persistence and money. I located a testing facility in Northern California and took the bike to them for a preliminary evaluation. After engineering a support stand for the bike on their Dyno, we ran a simplified version of the EPA test sequence. To my disappointment, the rotary's hydrocarbon emissions exceeded the EPA spec by about 25%. We noticed on the computer printout that much of this excess occurred during the idling period between acceleration stages (the EPA test is run under load, over a "standard urban driving cycle", about 11 miles of stop-and-go). I thought it might be related to the single rotor idle mode of this machine, in which one rotor intake is bypassed to turn it off while idling.

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The next step was clearly some serious thought and carb tuning. The rotary uses two SU type HIF vacuum slide carbs, which according to the Haynes SU manual are specifically designed to meet emissions requirements. There are various jet needles and other tuning parts available, but the basic carbs should be pretty clean-running if in good repair.

Now in order to fine-tune the mixture, I would need some way to monitor the various changes, other than just riding the bike. Best performance doesn't correspond to cleanest running and so there is a fine line between "lean enough to pass" and "too lean to run". After some phone calls and research, I learned of a unit which directly monitors air-fuel mixture (11:1 through 16:1 range) while the bike is running, under all throttle openings. This gadget is called the "O2 Meter" and is sold by International Motorsports, 1189 W. La Cadena, Riverside, CA 92501 (714) 781-5849. It costs about \$200 and consists of a fuel-injection type O2 sensor and a digital led meter which mounts on the handlebars. The complete system was loaned to me by a friend of Louis Mendelowitz (thanks, Eric), who uses it to tune dirt bikes.

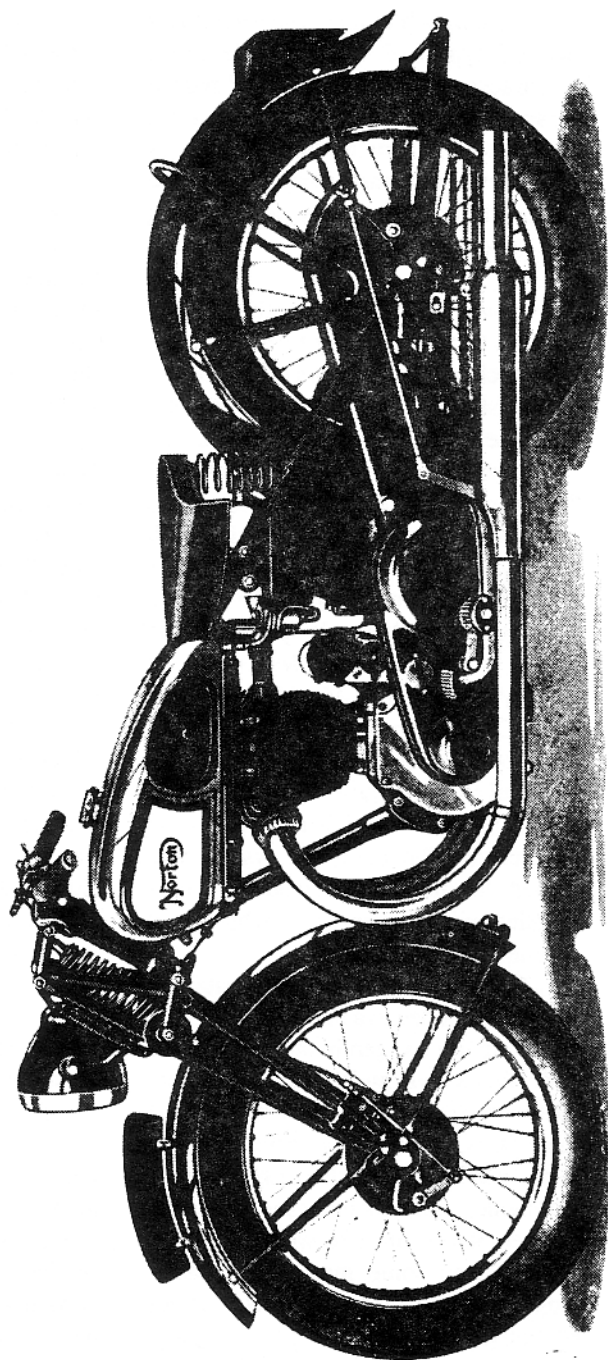
The sensor is a miniature catalytic converter bonded to a thermocouple. The more unburnt oxygen in the exhaust, the hotter the catalyst, and therefore the higher the thermocouple output. The sensor must run at 600 C. or hotter and therefore needs to be installed in the exhaust system near the engine. The kit includes some threaded adapters which must be welded into the exhaust, and some matching threaded plugs to install when the sensor is not being used.

I ordered an extra sensor from the manufacturer so that I could monitor both rotors with the flip of a toggle switch. The sensor cost \$84, which seemed a bit steep, but checking at the local auto parts store for the similar fuel-injection part I found about the same price. After installing the system, I warmed up the bike and turned the meter on. I immediately noticed that the idle-off (left) side was clean and the other (right) side was idling quite dirty (off-scale in fact). I shut the bike down to think for a while. When I looked at it an hour later, I noticed fuel dripping from the right side of the exhaust header. Aha! Hello dear, this is your wife here, your live in computer virus!

Like all modern motorcycles, the Interpol has a vacuum-operated main fuel petcock which only turns on when the engine is running. So how could there be a fuel drip? Well, also like most motorcycles, the petcock leaks a little. I was able to find a non-leak position a bit off-center, which I marked for future use. Now even if the petcock leaks a bit, the carburetor float valves are supposed to turn off when the float chambers are full. Even with a leaking petcock, the only way fuel could get into the exhaust header would be if the float valve(s) were leaking. This would certainly cause the bike to idle rich, since the fuel would be restricted only by the size of the leak rather than by the jetting.

With this theory in hand, I've obtained a complete set of carb spares from Norton. I ordered by phone using a Visa card number, and the parts were on my doorstep in three days by prepaid FedEx. Great service from a great motorcycle company. Next month I'll let you know if this solves the problem. See you in Brentwood.

MODEL NO. 20 4.90 H.P. O.H.V.





*Code Word: KIRBY*

- ENGINE.**—Bore 79 mm. Stroke 100 mm. 490 c.c. Two-port. Overhead valve push rod operated. Totally enclosed rocker gear.
- LUBRICATION.**—Full dry sump—gear pump pressure feed to bearings and piston. Valve guide lubrication.
- SILENCERS.**—Of scientific design, efficiently silencing the exhaust gases without interfering with engine performance.
- CARBURETTOR.**—AMAL needle jet, twist grip control.
- FRAME.**—Of immense strength, built throughout in jigs, all joints are brazed. High tensile steel tube. Graduated section lugs are used.
- GEARBOX.**—Four-speed. Ratios: Solo 4.44; 5.37; 7.85; 13.2; Sidecar 4.93; 5.96; 8.7; 14.7. Positive stop change-speed lever (Patent No. 424,154). Gate control available if specified when ordering. Shock absorber incorporated in clutch.
- OIL BATH CHAINCASE.**—NORTON. Patent No. 406,599.
- TRANSMISSION.**—Hans Renold chains.
- BRAKES.**—7" Internal expanding, 1½" wide, smooth and powerful in operation, providing a feeling of security. Quickly adjustable.
- WHEELS.**—Quickly detachable and interchangeable, fitted with journal bearings.
- TYRES.**—26 × 3.25 Dunlop Heavy Cord.
- FORKS.**—Patent No. 387,550, fitted with rebound springs and hand adjustable friction disc shock absorber. Fork link adjustment provided.
- HANDLEBARS.**—Patent No. 419,336, rubber mounted, fitted with steering damper.
- SADDLE.**—Flexible top, mounted so as to give an exceptionally comfortable riding position.
- FOOTRESTS.**—Adjustable; lugs are provided for fitment of pillion footrests.
- STANDS.**—Front and rear with additional prop stand, foot operated.
- PETROL TANK.**—2½ gallons capacity. Chromium plated.
- OIL TANK.**—Chromium plated and lined.
- STANDARD FINISH.**—All bright parts chromium plated, all enamelled parts finished in three coats best quality black enamel.
- MUDGUARDS.**—Large section, affording adequate protection.
- TOOL BOX.**—With complete tool equipment.
- GROUND CLEARANCE.**—Approximately 4½".

£62 - 0 - 0

**Minutes cont.**

Bunting volunteered to be responsible for arranging for the cake.

The proposed joint NOC/INOA rally to be held in 1991 was talked about with Alan mentioning that volunteers are needed to help with the organizing.

The BSA club was invited to participate with us at the Christmas party, and Don Dannmeier is going to investigate that possibility. We are going to elect club officers for 1990 at the party and Alan reminded everyone that the positions of Paraphernalia officer and secretary/treasurer will be vacant.

Margie gave a brief report on the vintage racing (Soda Springs?) in Colorado. Robert Briscoe offered his service as a professional printer for club business cards and/or fliers at reasonable cost. Use of club funds for this purpose was approved.

**Editors afterword:**

Don Dannmeier says that the Dec. 15th date conflicts with an event already scheduled by the BSA club. They might join us for a party at some other time. Also, the Emory pub while offering good food and excellent beer, was quite noisy and we therefore had to have the meeting outside! This is not acceptable in a club meeting venue, and we therefore still need an East Bay location with a private meeting room. The next East Bay date is January, so all you Berkeley folks keep your eyes and palate looking for a spot.

**ODE TO NORTON**

by Maya Abe

(written when she was a "kid")

*If there was an after life  
in which a choice there'd be  
of beast, or fruit or worldly dreams  
a Commando I would be.*

*I would think I'd be a desmo  
or maybe turn to shaft  
so I may ride the Heavens  
kicking Kawa's in their ass.*

*I would surely have drilled disc  
and alloy Star made rims  
that would down heavy lighting bolts  
tearing Honda's limb from limb.*

*My electric start would never fail  
and my gearing be so smooth  
that no Yamaha would pass me up  
it's so obvious that they'd lose.*

*With Ceriani forks and my Tomeseli  
grips  
with European road bars that would  
really turn the trick.*

*A quartz would be my headlight  
the daughter of the sun  
to blind out all Suzukies  
so they'd lower their heads and run.*

*When I burn out of history's light  
and Nortons grow tired and old  
I will make a streak across the sky  
a falling star I'm told.*

*And somewhere on this earthly land  
a human there will be  
wishing upon my falling star  
to be a Norton 750.*

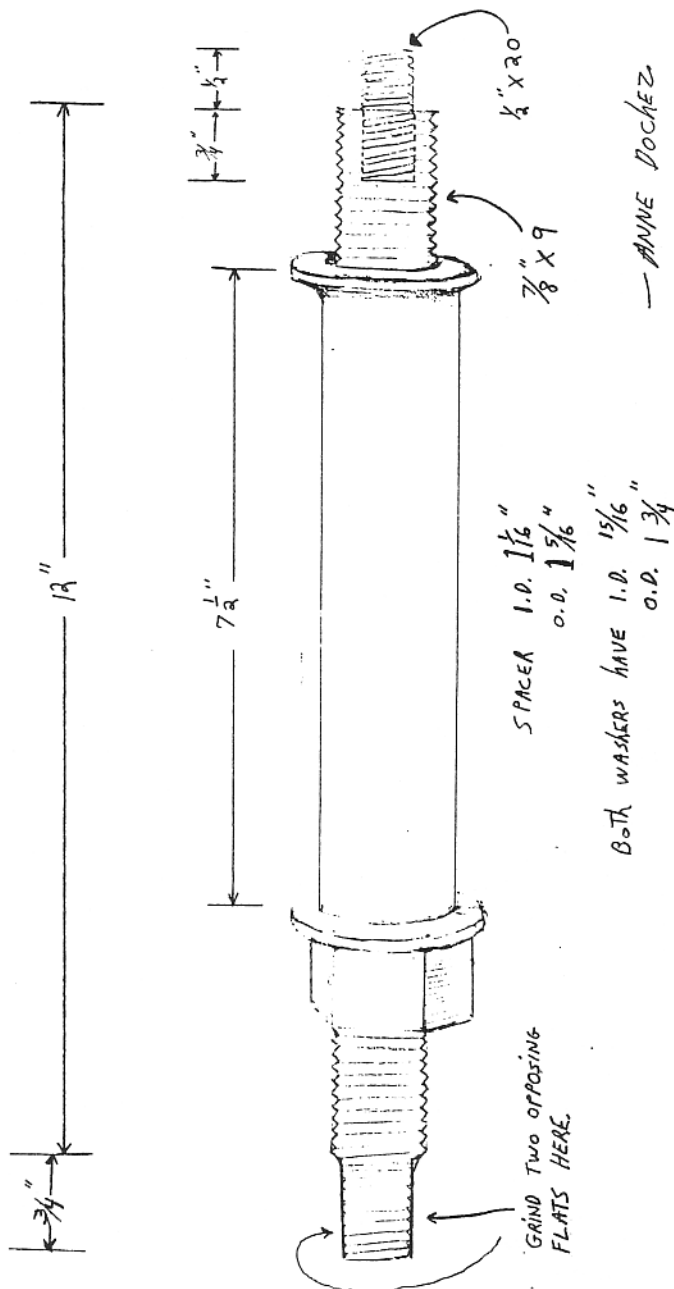
### Swing-Arm Spindle Extraction Tool

(by Art Sirota)

This drawing illustrates a tool Phil Radford made for me about two years ago to aid in the removal of rusted-in Commando swingarm spindles. This tool really works, extracting the spindle when everything else fails.

The 1/2" X 20 end of the tool must be threaded into the spindle at least five full turns. Of course, the spindle locating bolt on top of the swingarm must first be removed.

(Drawing by Anne Sirota.)



## Norton Leg Protectors?

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by Stephen Wood

Britain is sending a Japanese motorcycle back to Japan — and it's a better machine than it was when it left the factory, according to the Government-run Transport and Road Research Laboratory.

The TRRL boffins at Crowthorne, Berkshire, have taken a standard Kawasaki GPZ500 and fitted it with a leg protection system made to their specifications by Norton Motors.

Not only is the rider less likely to suffer leg injuries in a crash, say TRRL, but the bike is more aerodynamically efficient and stable.

The modified Kawasaki is to be assessed by the Japanese Automotive Research Institute in the drive to make motorcycling safer and it was packed off to Japan with the blessing of Roads and Traffic Minister Peter Bottomley, who declared two years ago that he intended to make the fitting of motorcycle leg protectors compulsory.

That announcement stunned the two-wheel world and sparked a huge protest, a 1200,000-name petition and demands for Bottomley's resignation.

Bikers' organizations, dealers and manufacturers united in a deafening chorus of argument against what they condemned as a dangerous and inadequately tested device that might actually cause deaths, or at best transfer injury from legs to hips, spine, chest and head.

The most damning criticism came from independent American investigators Dynamic Research Inc., who said: "The draft (TRRL) specification is unsound from a safety and technical standpoint and the TRRL research basis is flawed and incomplete... the specification mandates a device that would have significant risks and costs to the public."

All irrelevant nonsense, according to TRRL's Peter Watson, inventor of the leg protection system. "Certain elements would argue against anything," said Watson.

"The leg protection on our Kawasaki works. We have now conducted more than 1,000 static and dynamic tests, including our earlier research, and the system conforms to all the requirements for crash, impact and breakage.

"We have solved the problem of leg entrapment and I reject the arguments about transfer of injury." Tokyo is the capital of the world's bike industry and the Japanese, according to Watson, won't accept expensive design changes without compulsion.

Even Norton boss Philippe Le Roux acknowledged that there were strong arguments for more research into leg protection. "Compulsion would mean the end of the naked bike," he said.

The motorcycle world is waiting to hear what the Japanese say about the TRRL's 500cc baby.

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## Classified Advertisements

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For Sale - Mk3 roadster seat with metal base, excellent cond. \$35; Mk3 factory workshop manual \$15, orig.; Fastback petrol tank, new \$150. Call Art Sirota (415) 327-3167. /10

For Sale - 1974 Norton Commando 850 Mk II, clean. \$1,000 spent, fully reconditioned. Ready to ride. \$1,500. Call Dave (415) 887-2689. Hayward. /10

FOR SALE: Original John Player Norton in very good, stock condition except for re-upholstered seat (Corbin), stainless steel brake line and Dunlop 591's. Approx. 11,000 carefully ridden miles on the clock as of August '89. Always garaged and meticulously maintained. Serious inquiries only, please. Steve Coburn, (804) 296-2814, R.D.5 - Box 327, Charlottesville, VA 22901. /9

FOR SALE: Triumph Bonneville Special, stock, 1979, beautiful, collector-owned, only 2K. Always garaged. Run weekly. Virtually new and perfect. \$2950. Will Guyan, (707) 884-4300, Box 65, Gualala, CA 95445 (100 miles north of City). /9

FOR SALE: Genuine Norton Commando Fastback petrol tank, new, \$150. Single Mikuni carb conversion, complete, used but in perfect condition, \$65. 18" rear wheel for Atlas or early Commando, includes new Dunlop K81 TT100 tyre 4.10 H 18 tire and Dunlop rim. \$50. Art Sirota, 1281 Laurel St., Menlo Park, CA 94025, (415) 327-3167. /9

Used Norton Parts: 750-850 frame, good and straight; 750 sub-frame and swingarm, both good; Mk3 wiring harness, complete; Mk2 parts: headlamp shell & rim, chainguard, front fender, footrests, levers, instrument cases, set of clutch plates, auto-advance unit, stock dual seat, primary chaincases, K&N air filter for Amals, STD bore Hepolite pistons, Sebring electronic ignition, turn signal switch, cahincase inspection plugs, some cables, reflectors, coils, points plate.

New Norton parts: Boyer Ignition for 750/850, tail lamp fairing, replacement seat cover, new set points, exhaust nut lockrings.

Norton parts wanted: 23" front brake hose (rubber or stainless), Mk2 mirror stem, usable Dunlop K-70 Gold Seal 3.50x19 tyre.

I really would like these things to go to someone who needs them and who would give me any kind of a reasonable price. Call and let's talk.

Ken Ward (408) 974-0083, days.

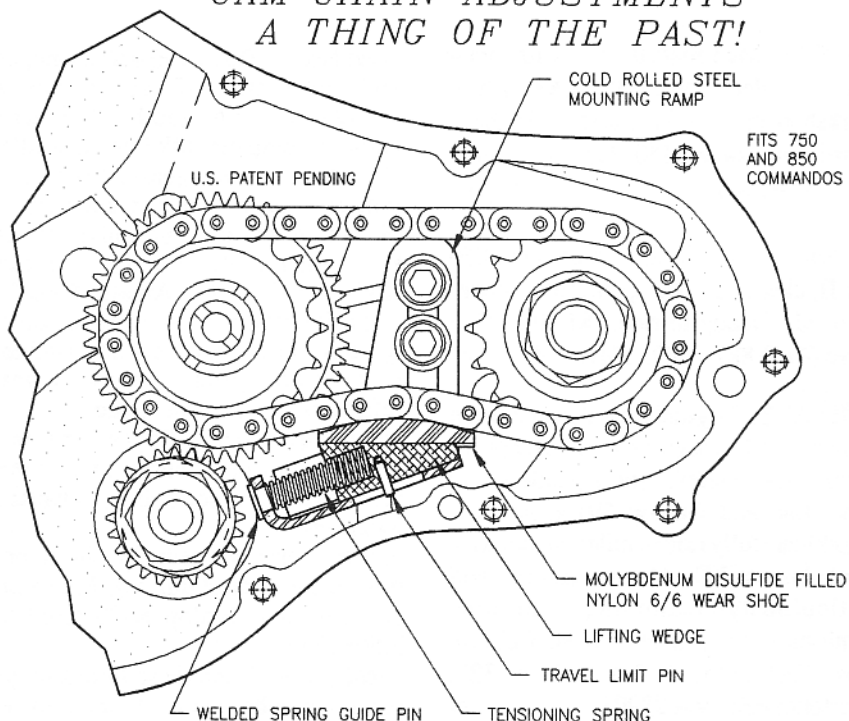
**For Sale - John Player Norton Production Racing fairing, never used. White gel-coat finish. Two lowers, one for standard pipes, one for tucked-in pipes. \$350 firm.**

Commando 6 gal tank and matching dual seat, black gel-coat finish, never used. This set was manufactured by Reg Curley. It's very predatory-looking, especially with low bars. \$450 firm. Call Richard Eyler at (408) 438-2442 /7

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— paid advertisement —

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# The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club



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**MOTO GUZZI**

## Norton Electric Starters

Made to work as God intended!

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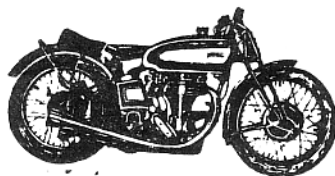
Raber's  
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Munroe has three mechanics that are familiar with Nortons and have been for a number of years. We can replace exhaust ports with the head on the bike and don't know of anyone else who can. The job looks like original factory! Call for a quote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



412 VALENCIA ST.  
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