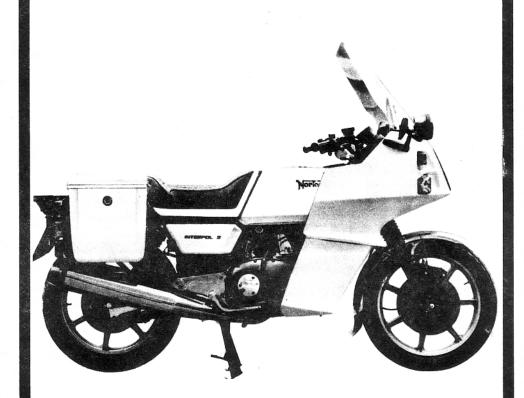


The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club

No. 135

July, 1989



Allan's New Toy, the Norton Interpol

### The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club



is published by the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain members aspects of the Norton motorc regarding the Norton motorcycle, including history. technical advice, and preservation of the marque.

NORTON NOTICE TICE is a reflection of its ip, who are encouraged to submit any technical tip, photograph (original or reflection of its readership, 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 Secretary/Treasurer. the Branch

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

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 only is 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 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' activity worldwide. provides voting 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 12 Oakland, CA 94611 (408) 475-7505

SEC/TREASURER Harry Bunting 1165 Crandano Ct Sunnyvale, Ca 94087 (408) 736-6492 NOTICE PUBLISHER Marick Payton

301 West O'Connor (415) 321-5083

V.P./RIDES

Margie Siegal 625 Fairmount Ave. (415) 654-1933

RECORDING SEC Art Sirota 1281 Laurel Street Menio Park.Ca 94025 (415) 327-3167

PARAPHERNALIA Robert Briscoe 3232 Balboa Street Menlo Park, Ca 94025 San Francisco, CA 94121 (415) 387-5593

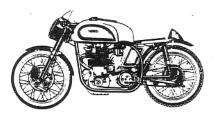
# NORTON OWNERS

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 connection with Club acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. Norton Notice articles or other material express the authors' views only and not necessibly the official policy of the Norton Owners Club or its other material express the authors wew 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 submitted for publication. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you



## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

## CLUB RIDES: Coordinated by Margie Siegal

July 19-23 International Morton Rally, Kimberly, British Columbia. Marick and Alan are leaving on July 15th (Saturday). Several others are planning to join us, and a chase/baggage truck will be provided. The whole trip will be about 14 days and will cover about 3500 miles in all. Call Alan if you're interested. (408) 475-7505

August 25-27 Annual Raily at the Grover Hot Springs State Park, Markleeville CA. This is a favorite site of many members, with excellent facilities and a large hotspring pool for soaking. Events will include an all-British swap meet in Carson on Saturday morning and a joint chili cook-off with the BSA club in the evening. The BSA guys may ride back with us Sunday, if they can keep up.

The rally fee will be \$20 on site. \$15 advance for the weekend (includes campsite, chili and raffle.) Send advance registration to Harry Bunting, our Secretary.

#### Club Meeting Schedule

The club meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month, at 7:30 PM. The location rotates between Peninsula, East Bay, City, and South Bay locations

August 10 South Bay
Harry's Hoffbrau
El Camino near Castro Street
Mountain View

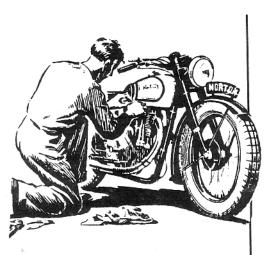
September 14 East Bay Gine's Pizza 2629 Ashby Ave Berkeley

October 12 San Francisco

Due to the poor service and downright rudeness we received at the Harbor Light in June, The club will be meeting elsewhere in the City. In short, we need to find another venue. Suggestions, please - lets not end up at Zuka's.



## Alan's Wrench Tech Tips and Gossip from the Editor



I survived my epic pilgrimage to Great Britain with a severely damaged Visa card but otherwise well-satisfied. I'll be writing up the trip over the next few issues of the Notice. I took a video camcorder with me, thanks to the generosity of Ken Armann. The four hours of material I brought back will be edited into a 1-hour special, including a tour of the Norton factory and a lap of the TT racecourse on a Norton rotary. First showing will probably be at the August branch meeting, or...

The annual rally is coming up, on the third weekend of August. If you only get to one club event a year, this should be the one. It's a fabulous area to camp and a super ride over

Highway 4 to get there. See the Events calendar for details.

#### The Editor Abroad

#### Part 1

After an uneventful flight from New York (not stopping at Lockerbie!) we were met at heathrow by Pat Hayes of the Essex branch, who took us on a mad dash through London to a flat where we were staying. Pat is a true gentleman with a fine sense of humor and boundless generousity, a credit to the Club.

After getting settled with a big breakfast on Monday, we went over to Dave Aivy's house, where I was given a test-drive on an Interpol rotary. The machine is extremely fast while still tractable at low rpm's. Handling was a bit heavy at low speed, due to the large fairing, but light and precise once underway. It makes some very strange noises to the Commando-tuned ear, like a big single 2-stroke accelerating at low rpm's, then a multi-cylinder 4-stroke above 3,000. On deceleration there is pronounced clattering from the rotor backlash and virtually no engine braking. I'm told all this is quite normal but it takes a bit of getting used to.

Almost everything is very expensive here, including fuel at about \$3/gallon, and, of course, British motorcycles. You can get a '79 R100 BMW for £900 (\$1500) but a '72 Commando will cost you £2000

(\$3200). Food and rents are also very high and I'm constantly reminded of how easy we have it in the States. Count your blessings.

I'd almost become resigned to buying a Beemer for the trip when I noticed in the Motor Cycles News classifieds a (gasp) Norton Interpol rotary for sale! The asking price was lower than I had expected but still more than I could afford. I decided to look at it anyway, so I called the guy, who turned out to be in Cardiff (about 180 miles from London). I decided to at least look at it and, perhaps, make a low offer.

So, on Tuesday Pat and Heather found me a rental car for £18 (\$30) a day and off I went, driving on the left while sitting in the right-hand seat, shifting with my left hand! It was very confusing and difficult at first but after an hour or so I adjusted to it. The drive to Cardiff was all motoroway at 75+mph and I found the house without difficulty.

The bike was cleaner than Dave's but didn't have as much power and refused to idle. I told the guy I would call him and drove back to Essex. After some phone calls to the factory I got a good history of the bike and some possible fixes. This mchaine (#3076) was built for the RAF police with the "single-rotor-idle" option. Below 1800 rpm, one rotor shuts off and simply pumps cooling air through the motor. This is done by blocking the idle passage of the left SU carb and some special circuitry in the ignition black box. Most machines of this type have been converted to the "double-rotor" as the special block box is unreliable.

The machine had been sitting idle

for almost a year and the rotor seals might have become stuck from dried oil and carbon deposits, resulting in low compression on one or both rotors. This can sometimes be remedied by application of Red-X decarbonising additive (counds like Caseite). If not, the factory will do a full rebuild with new seals for only £150 (\$250), including labor.

After this encouraging news I made the best offer I could for the bike, which as accepted! I'm now on my way by train to Cardiff to pick it up and try to ride it back to Essex. I'll do the Red-X first and a carb adjustment. I feel confident that the bike will make it home, even if it doesn't idle. engine is so simple that only total ignition failure or a rotor seizure would stop it dead. Anyway, I have tools with me and where there's tools, there's hope. The Great Adventure continues in the next installment as I try to fit a sidecar to a Norton Rotary for the first time in history.

PS: The JPS Norton won first at the Mallory F1 season-opener on Sunday with Steve Spray riding. Go, Norton!

#### Part 2

The ride back from Cardiff to London is trouble-free. The bike is still hard to start even after the Red-x treatment and a new battery. Once running, everything is fine and the 180 mile return trip takes just 3 hours, including a food stop. This machine loves to go fast, 85 is a comfortable cruising speed. I can see lots of speeding tickets in my future.

In between sightseeing trips

into London and Greenwich, I work at preparing the bike for touring. The back half of a Kawi 750 seat makes a fine pillion pad, and some old John Bull footpegs are added. The final touch is a Honda 50 luggage rack which just happens to fit perfectly over the old police radio bracket. Even the bolt holes line up and the job is done in minutes.

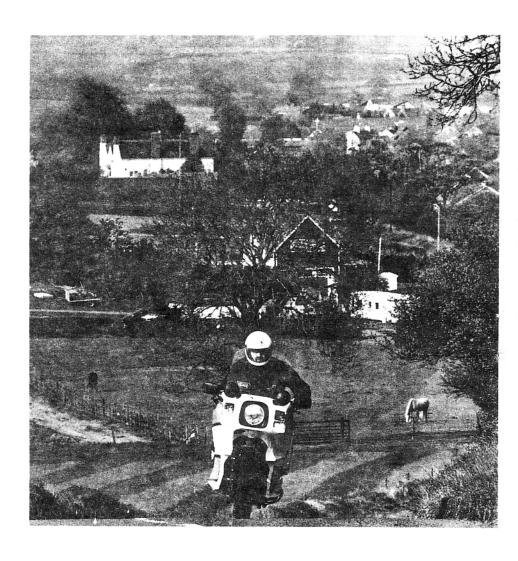
On Saturday I take a side trip up to the Heddington Sidecar factory in the town of Sible Heddington (near Colchester). These folks specialise in custombuilt and very deluxe sidecars for BMW's etc. After taking a close look at the frame and engine mountings, they declared the bike unfit for sidecar service. The expense of building a complete subframe for the lower mountings would not be justified due to the low volume. The similar problem presented by the BMW K-bikes was worth the effort because of the large customer base. I left their shop considerably wiser in the tricks and troubles of sidecar design.

Bright and early Monday afternoon, we're packed and off up the road, headed for Phillip Mitchell's house in Suffolk. Phil is the Spares Officer of NOC and has offered to put us up for the night. About halfway there we pull off the motorway for a break and find that the bike won't start. After incessant cranking, the starter motor seizes up for good! Oh well, time to push. To my surprise, the bike is easy to push

start, even with 100+ lbs of luggage aboard. It finally dawns me: worn seals compression at rest. Once the motor spins fast enough for centrifugal force to force the seals out, compression is restored and the motor starts immediately. So the drill is, put it in first gear, key on, clutch engaged, and just start walking. At about 5 mph ( 1200 rpm), the motor fires. You have to be sure to pull in the clutch immediately or it could simply run away, but otherwise the starting is much easier than a piston engine would be (other than a moped).

With this problem solved, we motor on to our destination. just beating Phillip home from work (helicopter maintenance instructor). Before dinner we're off to view the club spares. Everything has been consolidated in one warehouse space, and Phillip has worked very hard to organize and catalog the stock. There's a bit of everything, including quite a lot of OHC singles parts (pistons, valves, guides, etc) and also a quantity of Commando exhaust, gearbox, and engine spares. The LR fastback tank I was seeking was nowhere to be found, likewise the Model 7 tank. I did get a piston and bearing set for Gary Formo's Model 19 single (600cc).

After a fine barbecue dinner Phillip's wife Frances takes us over to a nearby Manor House which is being restored and used as a showroom by a local antique dealer. This is the real stuff, like

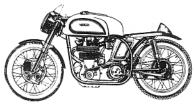


Is this our Fearless Leader racing through the English countryside?

exquisite Chippendale sideboards, etc. And I thought *motorcycles* were an expensive hobby! Up in the attic the hand-hewn oak beams are visible and there are cobwebs and ghosts of centuries past in every corner, a piece of living history in a land where the rich past is fast disappearing in the name of progress.

Tuesday we're up early and off to the Norton factory to get the motor fixed. My appointment is at 2pm but it's after 5 when we finally arrive after a grueling slow ride of only 200 miles. The north-south roads in England are pretty good, but pity the man who has to travel west in the Midlands - one detour or roundabout after another, roads poorly marked, and very slow local traffic with no passing lane for 20 miles at a stretch.

Our arrival at the factory is just in time for closing, so Service Manager Brian Deely reschedules the bike for the following day. After failing to fine a Bed-and-Breakfast vacancy in the area, Brian offers to put up up for the night, and once again the great hospitality of the British leaves us



1963 catalog drawing of Manx 30M and 40M

in their debt. We leave the Interpol at the factory and Brian gets me a loaner Commander to ride over to his place. The Commander is the watercooled rotary in sports current production, a very slick, fast machine. Everything feels lighter and smoother than the Interpol, from engine to brakes to seating position. I find the handling too quick for my taste (the steering angle was changed from the Interpol) and the brakes (Japanese instead of Brembo) are too sensitive, otherwise the bike is super. Acceleration is truly awesome, confirming my feeling that the old Interpol engine is worn out.

After a quick breakfast we dash back to the factory (about 10 miles) where the engine is already out of my bike (takes about 45 minutes). Another 45 minutes and it's completely disassembled on the bench. The wear is found to be in the tip seal springs and the side surfaces where the seals run on bare aluminum. The side plates are reground flat on an exchange basis and are available from stock as are the seals and springs. All bearings are ok and are reused after cleaning. The engine is reassembled and ready to install by 2 pm, but Brian has noticed some worn transmission gears and these are replaced as well. A new starter motor (Lucas, "Made in India") is put in free of charge!

One final hitch occurs as the old temp sensor thermocouple

breaks off in the engine casting. After a frantic search, Brian finds the special bottom tap which is used to repair this, and the reinstallation is completed by 5pm. After a road test and carb adjustment the bike gets the stamp of approval. The final bill is 348 pounds (about \$540) including all parts and labor, a shop manual and some spare cables. Try to match that rebuilding your Yamazuki.

In a light drizzle we pack and leave immediately for Scotland, aiming to get half way (250 miles) before stopping. About 50 miles up the motorway, near Carlisle, its raining buckets, visibility is about 10 feet, and one rotor loses spark. Barely making headway, we pull off at the next exit and take refuge at commercial hotel. The price is high but the pub downstairs is cozy, the bath water hot, and the color tv has some very funny local punk-style variety show which keeps us up into the wee hours. It rains steadily all night.

Next day the rain has let up and we ride straight up to Inverness, about 450 miles, stopping only once for food and fuel The bike runs better and better as the new engine beds in. Crossing the highlands at about 5pm the air temperature drops and I'm seriously worried when I see snow on the ground in valleys below the road level. The weather holds off except for a few flurries and we arrive safely at our friends

about 9pm, wearing every layer of clothing available. The sun is still out behind high clouds and it's about 40 F. The latitude here is about the same as Kodiak Alaska, as far North as I've ever been in my life. In town the next day, a shopkeeper says to me "sure hope this fine weather holds for you". Ha Ha.

The sun actually breaks through the following morning, and after a lazy breakfast we hike up a local hill to view the spectacular scenery, looking out over Lock Lough towards the Black Isle. The land here is fairly fertile compared to the rest of Scotland, with rapeseed fields taking over the traditional sheepgrazing as a commercial crop. Most of the land is quite barren though, and there are less than 5000 people living between Inverness and the west coast. After another day of visiting and relaxing, we head south again to catch the ferry for the Isle of Man.

#### (end of part 2)

Next weekend several of us are departing for the INOA rally in Canada. I don't know which bike I'll be taking, since the rotary I bought is being held up in customs due to EPA red tape. I'm fairy confident that I will be able to get it in but it's likely to take weeks or even months due to the paperwork required. I should know for sure by next month, so stay tuned.

#### MAY NOC MEETING

The May meeting convened at Gino's Pizza in Berkeley, where the upper loft provided us with an area to eat, drink and conduct "business."

Alan indicated that he'd be departing soon for merrie England and promised a full report on his trip when he returns. We understand that his transport while there will be other than Norton.

Margie gave the monthly Ride Rap, confirming that the June ride would depart TT Motors with or without her, to amble up to Sears Point for the races--in which Mr. Swortsfigure will dominate, if all goes to Plan. [Ed. Note: he did.) Robert Briscoe reminded those attending that the anticipated 500 miles per day to reach the INOA Rally in British Columbia might require considerably more iron in the butt than most Nortonites currently possess. Travel plans by members seemed to be relatively unconfirmed at this point.

After much discussion on possibilities for the local Norton Rally, it was decided that the most convenient time would be August, and it was agreed that this event would coincide with the weekend scheduled for the joint NOC/BSAOC ride. the rally will be centered at Grover Hot Springs, outside Markleville, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, August 25, 26 and 27. The day ride on Saturday will make it over to Jerry Meadows' place in Sparks, Nevada, for the chili cook-off with the BSAOC.

Our tech session was comprised of Rick Avidano's presentation of his cam chain tensioner, the article you've seen advertised in the *Notice*. With written and graphic material for handouts (sorry, Cory) as well as a couple of the kits on hand, we got a straightforward explanation of his theory and the finer points of application. Some debate followed on the nature of Norton engineering, in general, and cam bushes, in particular, but there was general agreement that the environmental engineering of the pizza joint required the re-engagement of the turbulent fan in the wall to remove the heat generated by such a hot topic. Thanks, Rick.

All present adjourned to the curb outside to talk more Norton and to eye the Dave Winters machine, especially. No chrome waste there.

-- Don Danmeier

## LEN IOSTY INJURED ON MT. HAMILTON ROAD

Former NOC member Leonard Iosty was badly injured Memorial Day weekend when a pickup truck, coming down Mt.Hamilton Road, made a left turn right in front of him. Len was riding his Laverda Mirage 1200 with the lights on. According to Tom Dabel, who was riding ahead of Len, the pickup driver cut the corner from Mt. Hamilton Road onto Quimby very short, giving the appearance of trying to beat Len through the intersection.

After skidding 30 feet, Len hit the right rear of the truck, flying 30 feet before hitting the roadway. His right knee cap and left wrist were crushed. Material from the kneecap was used to repair the damaged wrist. He spent six days in the hospital. (The truck driver was insured.)

Len is now recuperating at home. His phone number is (408) 226-6304.

## Update on AMA Ruling on Norton Rotary

Last month you all heard from the AMA about the Norton Rotary, Now let's look at what they said: The AMA has stated that their Superbike Class would be the best way for Norton to go so long as they meet HOMO-LOGATION REQUIREMENTS. What that means is that Norton must sell a certain amount of bikes in this country. Now we all know that is a major problem for Norton. It also means that the bike that they race would not be eligible. The AMA Superbike class would only be open to the road going version of Norton. The Norton Commander is not a race bike.

The Pro Twins Series started out as the old BOTT series (battle of the twins). That meant Nortons, Triumphs, BSAs, Ducati and Harley. But all 750 cc machines. Ducati and Harley had bigger Twins that they wanted to sell and race. So, what did AMA do. They gave the boot to the very racers and bikes that made the series and went big time. Now Norton has a big time racer. But to change the rules is suddenly different.

So, what to do about it? The AMA always encourages members to boycott companies that wrong motorcyclists. In this case I think that would be wrong. The AMA does a lot of good. Our complaint is only with the competition department.

Instead of boycotting the AMA and their events, I think we should go to their events and take our cause to the members. I think we should go out and get as many people as possible to sign a petition to let the Norton race. We are all paying to see AMA races and we as customers should be able to have a way in what we pay for!

Don't just go the the British events and get people to sign. GO TO THE AMA EVENTS AND GET PEOPLE TO SIGN!! Let's find out what the rider on the street has to say.

Write me, call me, whatever. I will send you copies of the petition. Make as many copies as you want and get them FILLED. Make sure that you get the AMA number. When you get them filled SEND THEM TO ME. I will deliver them personally at the end of the Summer, prior to their Rules Meeting for 1990.

Jim Noll, INOA VP 58 Merwin Ave. Rochester, NY 14609 (716) 288-8363

#### **PETITION**

Name:		
Add:		
Motorcycle:		
AMA #:		

### DOT HELMET TESTING SUSPENDED

Bikers Against Manslughter (B.A.M.) recently learned that the Department of Transportation, whose DOT approval has been required on all adult-sized motorcycle helmets sold in the U.S. since 1980, has not conducted helmet testing for more than two years.

B.A.M. national director Bill Bish, in preparing to testify in opposition to California's proposed mandatory helmet haw (AB 8), asked Wayne Curtin of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) to contact the DOT regarding specifics of helmet testing. Curtin discovered through Jim Gilkey of the DOT Enforcement Dept., that due to budget cuts not a single helmet has been tested since 1987--neither as provided by helmet manufacturers for approval, or off-the-shelf testing for quality--and testing prior to that was "off-and-on."

In addition to the above, Bish pointed out several other interesting considerations to the California Senate Transportation Committee:

Virtually every state required helmets to be DOT approved and to bear a DOT sticker verifying that the helmet meets or exceeds federal standard FMVSS218. However, that standard was developed in 1974 and has not been modified or improved upon since.

This is important to note since both of the other two primary American standards, American National Standards Institute (ANSI Z90.1), which is about 20 percent more stringent than DOT, and the Snell Memorial Foundation (the most stringent), are stricter and reflect more current research findings.

For example, the DOT standard allows up to 400 G;s of impact force--400 times the force of gravity--to reach the wearer's head. ANSI and Snell allow only 300 and 285 G's, respectively and, according to Snell Memorial Foundation president Dr. Clinton Chichester, "All the data suggests that you don't want to go to 300. That may well be the threshold of both concussion and serious injury. The 1980 Snell standard was 300, before being reduced in 1985 to 285 G's. The DOT is 400. Most of the international standards are 300. That number will come down for future standards"

Unfortunately, because of fiscal cutback and manpower depletions there may not be any "future standards" for the DOT, even if they do resume testing in the near future. And when they do conduct helmet testing, the primary test consists of placing a helmet on a hearform, raising it to a level of 6 feet and dropping it two times onto a flat anvil. Impacting twice on the same spot it must allow no more than 400 G's to reach the head-form inside the helmet.

According to a brochure entitled "The Most Asked Questions About Motorcycle Helmets," these minimum requirements represent mere 3.5 mph impacts. And, quoting from the DOT themselves, "There is no evidence that any helmet thus far, regardless of cost or design, is capable of rejecting impact stress above 13 miles per hour."

#### **CLASSIFIEDS**

For Sale - John Player Norton Production Racing fairing, never used. White gel-coat finish. Two lowers, one for standard pipes, one for tuckedin 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

For Sale - P11 frame with swing arm. Appears straight but needs TLC - \$55. Original parts books, 1950 all singles including OHC, \$35 as new, \$25 soiled, 1957 singles, soiled \$18, 1961/62 singles and twins, some pages are copies \$15.

Wanted - center stand, rear lifting handles (fender stays) for 1957 ES2 in pre-featherbed swingarm frame. Call Neil Peacock, 8845 Elgin Drive, Lafayette CO 80026 telephone

Mk3 Commando orig. factory workshop manual, new \$15 Commando exhaust lockring tool \*063968, new \$15. Art Sirota (415) 327-3167

(303) 499-1175

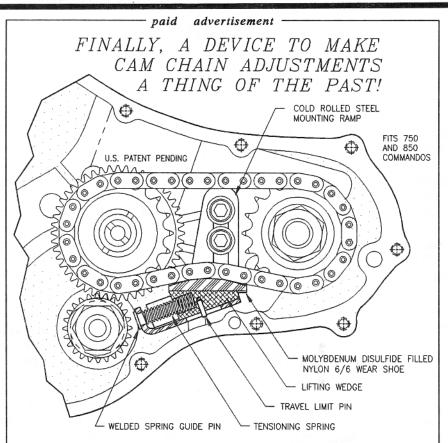
'74 Norton Commando 850 Roadster, 12,000 original miles, strong healthy runner, stock except for alloys, Koni's and Dunstall mufflers. Original owner. \$2,200 or bo. 285-6735

WANTED: Metal left side cover for 1973, 850 Roadster, with no dents. Harry Bunting, (408) 736-6492

1974 850 Commando "Gentleman's Express":

Interstate tank & side covers, Fastback tail section & seat, Norvil style 1/2 fairing, JPN front fender. Black/silver w/red stripe, all in Imron. Many high performance modifications including Norvil front brake, Norvil head steady, Mk III isolastics, roller bearing swing arm with cottered pivot, stainless fork brace, rear set controls w/reversed cam plate (shifts like stock), braided stainless oil and brake lines, Sun alloy rims. stainless spokes & nipples, oil pressure, cylinder head and oil temp., ammeter and clock by VDO, oil filter head modified to accept Fram filter. Fiamme electric horns, halogen headlight, layshaft roller bearing, three phase 180 Watt alternator, Amal Mk II carbs, new chain & sprockets, 95% stainless fasteners. Full Size Krauser bags and mounts available for \$150. Priced at \$2900, You pay crating & shipping. Call Scot at (415) 829-3483 6-8PM Pacific Time Only.

1984 Honda XR350 Dirt Bike: Radial four valve head, disk brake, twin carb, four stroke single. 12" plus of suspension travel at each end, good knobbies, too. Just the thing to improve your street riding, take out your frustrations, etc. Unbreakable, comes with bark busters and extra levers. \$750 BO. Scot at (415) 829-3483 6-8pm Pacific Time Only.



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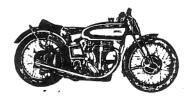
Raber's European Cycle Works Inc. 1615-C Almaden Rd. (Rear Bldg.) San Jose, CA 95125

MUNROE MOTORS, INC.

MOTORCYCLES ES - SERVICE - PARTS

SINCE 1958

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.



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