



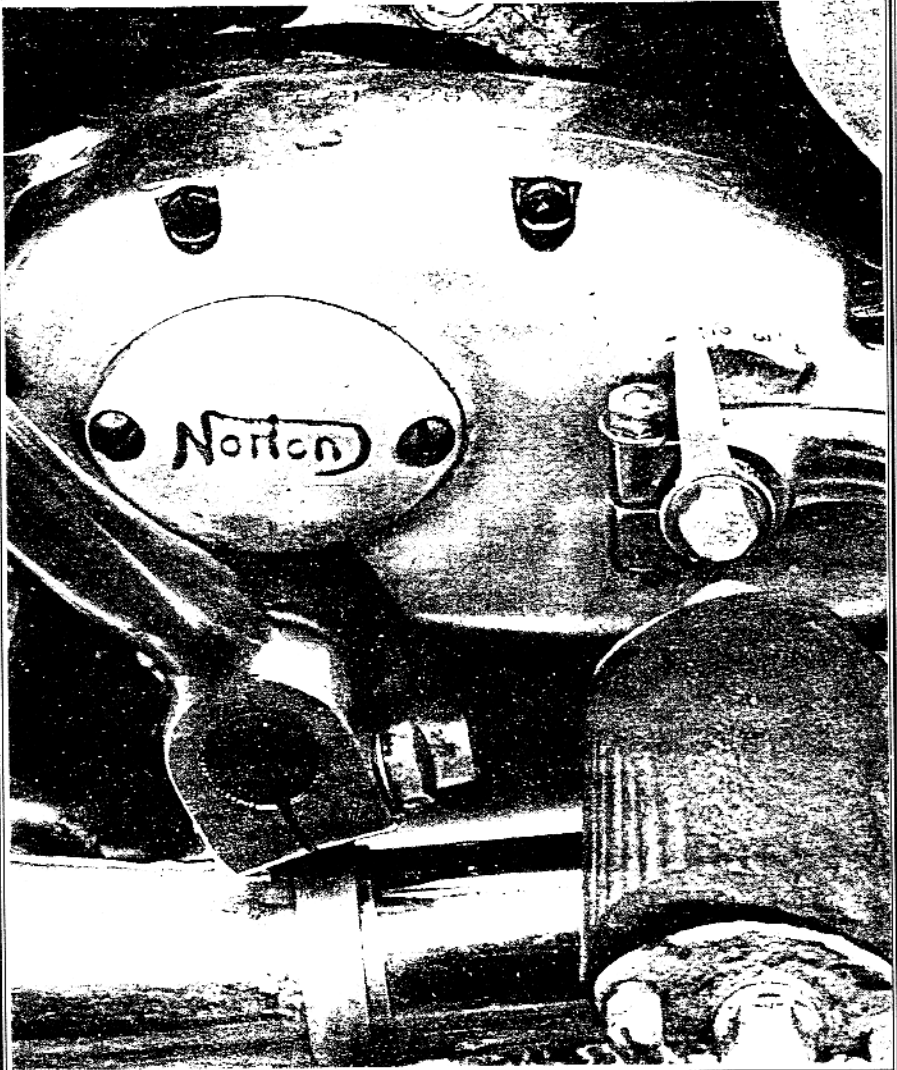
Norton Notice

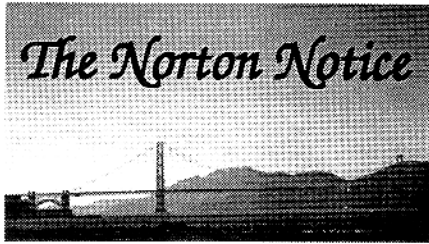


The Newsletter of the
Northern California Norton Owners Club

No. 219

October, 1996





is published by the Northern California Norton Owners Club. Its purpose is to inform and entertain members about all aspects of Norton motorcycles, including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque. The *Norton Notice* is a reflection of its readers, who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, or photograph (original or otherwise) in good taste for other Norton enthusiasts to enjoy.

The deadline for submitting items for publication is the 20th of each month. The *Norton Notice* welcomes contributions submitted electronically, preferably in MS Word, MS Works, Word Perfect, or Rich Text Format. The *Notice* is produced using Aldus PageMaker 5.0.

Membership in the Northern California Norton Owners Club is available for \$20 per year. Membership dues are payable to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer. Renewal dues are payable at the end of the individual's membership year, in the month designated by the last number of the individual's membership number as listed on the mailing label of the *Norton Notice* and on the membership card.

Send change-of-address information to the Branch Secretary/Treasurer, not the *Norton Notice* Editor.

The Northern California Norton Owners Club is affiliated with the Norton Owners Club of England and the International Norton Owners Association. Interested persons can join these organizations per the terms outlined on the Branch membership application form.

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NEW! Club website:
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HypnoVista Software (415) 536-1411

Words to live by. . . *The objective of the Northern California Norton Owners Club is to promote, encourage and develop motorcycling activities. The Club's members are owners of Norton motorcycles and often submit technical tips pertaining to Norton motorcycles for publication in the Norton Notice. Technical tips 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 its members for any problems resulting from use of these technical tips. The Club assumes no responsibility for the acts or omissions of its members in connection with Club activities. Norton Notice articles 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. Club activities and membership are subject to standards established in the Club by-laws. Advertising published does not imply endorsement of products, goods or services. Now you know.*

Upcoming Events

Rides are on Sundays, unless otherwise noted. All rides kickstart at **9 a.m. sharp**. Be gassed-up, fed, and ready to roll! Call Jim Carton for details about any ride.

■ October

13 Mt. Hamilton ride*

20 Non-National, Big-Purse, San Jose Mile

One week after the Del Mar Mile. Winner gets \$10,000 (vs. \$4,600 for most AMA Nationals). There should be plenty of talent in the area for this one!

■ November

3 Northern CA All-British Ride

And Seventh Annual Don Danmeier 50th Birthday Party
(415) 898-0330 for information

17 After the Danmeier ride*

■ December

15 Holiday party/Annual General Mtg. Fontana's Italian Restaurant, 1850 El Camino Real, Menlo Park

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m., dinner at 6, gift exchange at 7:30. R.S.V.P. to Maya Lai by December 1. See reply form in this issue.

* Points awarded for participation

Maya's Minutes

by Maya Lai, President

The meeting in Mountain View was pretty quiet. We voted on electing Club Officers by mail ballot. At the October 10 meeting, which will be at the Connecticut Yankee in San Francisco, we will have the second consecutive vote. When it passes, it will be an official change in our Club By-laws.

The Old Timer's Ride was WET! About 30 determined people showed up with some very nice bikes. Neil Kelly brought his "new" Triumph Sprint and Pat Munroe brought a "Classic" Triumph. I managed to finagle a ride out of Neil and Pat and there was definitely a different feeling between the bikes. For those of you who think they are *too* Japanese, I beg to differ. Other than the whirring noise on the Classic, it was a neat bike to ride. I don't think I can talk Neil out of his bike, although I tried. Neil's son was a great sport, having to sit in the gloom and wait for us to come back from. Thank you both and thank you Pat! (Did everyone see Pat in the Chronicle on September 14?)

We had chicken, fruit and cake. Sachii and George brought a tremendous amount of salad and more fruit. Thank you for going out of your way to help me, Sachii! We had no casualties, and besides a few wet paws with gloves and socks toasting over the barbecue, we had a good time.

The nominations for Officers were opened and were as follows: President, Lynne Miller; Vice President, Jeff Gruwell; Secretary/Treasurer, Maya Lai; Newsletter Editor, Stevan Thomas. Nominations are now closed. As for the appointed positions, we still need volunteers for Ride Marshall (Jim won't be doing it again), Sergeant-at-Arms, and Paraphernalia Person.

We have, as of 9/20/96, \$1,296 in the Club kitty.

Upon the Avons

by Stevan Thomas, Norton Notice Editor

Sheesh! We're going to try again on the pictures from the Rally. The photocopier I've been using for the cover pictures does fine copying from a book. It took Andy McKerral to point out that with the "certain brand copier" I'm using, even at the half-tone setting the resolution is too high to get a good copy from a photograph. From now on, I'm going to Kinko's to make 40 D.P.I. prints, which should work much better.

The Sunday morning of the Old Timers Ride started out misty and proceeded to become rainy. I was going to ride with Lynne Miller, but instead of meeting me on his bike, he was waiting on the corner of Portola and Vicente with his car. He said he'd be driving down to Alice's with Mike Burnham shortly. I found out later that ten minutes after my two comrades and I left, it was absolutely pouring! I already knew that Lynne wouldn't be able to go on the Old Timer's Ride and picnic, he was just going to be able to do Alice's for breakfast, and with the deluge in San Francisco, I can see why he and Mike didn't make it.

We didn't get more than a heavy mist most of the way down, although I opted to stay off of Skyline as it looked pretty soaked in. As we topped a very slick climb up 84, I was amazed at what was a pretty good turn-out.

It's a good thing Alice's has umbrellas at the outdoor tables! We

must have been a pretty funny sight. At our main table, there were four of us seated and at least five or six standing around with their heads under the umbrella. Official departure time came, and the consensus was: "no need to hurry up and leave, let's see if it clears up any in a little while". I found Gruwell across the road, inside eating next to a fireplace. The fireplace was a vision unto itself: it was surrounded by drying socks, shoes, gloves and sundry other wet things, all arranged like sports fans on bleachers in front of the fire.

The ride was a bit truncated, but as various little groups arrived at Huckleberry Flat, the sun came out! Those who came got a rare opportunity to see Alan Goldwater on a slightly ratty Norton Commando chopper!

The nominations for next year's officers were short and to the point: Lynne Miller for President, Jeff Gruwell for Vice President, Maya Lai for Secretary and Treasurer, and Stevan Thomas (that's me) for Newsletter Editor. Also, we need to vote on this one more time at a Club meeting, but it looks like the election this year will be by mail ballot, with the final tally at the Club Christmas party.

I think you will find that this group, when elected, will make sure that next year will be a fun one for the Norton Club.

Christmas Party/Annual Meeting Scheduled

The Club Christmas Party and Annual General Meeting will be **Sunday December 15, 1996** at Fontana's Italian Restaurant, 1850 El Camino Real, Menlo Park. Cocktails are at 5:30 p.m. and dinner is at 6 p.m. If we have forty or more members and guests, we get the room to ourselves!

We need to give the restaurant a confirmed guest count in advance, so *please* choose your entrees and R.S.V.P. (with a check) to Maya Lai by December 1. Reply forms are in this issue and will be in the November *Notice* as well. There will be a gift exchange (not a "white elephant" one this time), under the usual rules. Try to keep your gift at \$10 or \$15.

If you can't make it for dinner, but want to participate in the gift exchange, let us know on the reply form and plan to show up around 7:30 p.m. We encourage you to come for dinner if at all possible, partly because if we don't have forty guests for dinner, we won't have a room to ourselves and there may not be room for a gift exchange!

The Club will provide some wine, and the restaurant is giving us a great deal on beer: \$2 a glass for Sierra Nevada draft. Thank you, Fontana's!

Muising on the Web

by Dana Muise

As a new member of the NCNOC, I feel obligated to dedicate some of my time to the Club (besides rides). After all, a Club like this can only function through volunteers. Like everybody else, I can't find time to do my laundry, much less contribute my time, so being in the Internet business I figure the one thing I can contribute is the development and maintenance of a Home Page dedicated to the Club.

Our new Home Page is up and running, and can be found at: <http://ru486.hypno.com~norton>

With so many years of award-winning *Norton Notice* back issues, the Website will not lack content. It is currently divided into five sections: NCNOC Club Info., Upcoming Events, *Norton Notice* articles, Norton Tech Sessions and links to other English cycle Websites. The next thing will be a photo gallery of members' bikes and pictures of rallies and Club rides. I plan to create a photo tech session on replacing the gearbox layshaft bearing (using my Commando as the guinea pig!)

All said, the *Norton Notice* is great incentive for membership, so I won't be using any material from the most recent issues - except for the *Classified* ads. (Please let me know if you do NOT wish to have your ad added to the Web.) New content will be added monthly and all are invited to contribute. You can contact the Web Master, Dana Muise, at dana@hypnovista.com or (415) 536-1411.

Gruwell's Garage

by Jeff Gruwell

On Saturday the 15th of September, my wife and I had a wet and wonderful experience! Mounted on an alloy steed, we took to the pavement at approximately 0830 hours, and by 0900 it was drizzling. Keeping up with the flow of traffic, we crossed the Bay Bridge, took the 101, jumped over to the 280 and got off at Halfmoon Bay/Skyline Boulevard. By this stage of the trip I was soaked, and I, being the perfect gentleman that I am, acted as a human fairing for my wife, thus keeping Kitty dry! And let me tell ya, that Skyline Boulevard is slick when wet.

We got to Junction 35 and 84 about 0945 and I was delighted to see such a great turnout in spite of the foul weather. After warming up and drying off by the fireplace at the Woodside Cafe, Kitty and I shared a vegetarian omelet, which I ruined because I ordered it with extra ham and bacon. . . go figure!

Anyway, after throwin' down on the serious grubbage, we migrated over to San Gregorio and stopped for a cup of coffee and listened to some folk musicians sing their hearts out. I have a real soft spot for that sort of thing, so naturally we were the last to leave.

We arrived fashionably late at the picnic in Memorial Park, and fortunately there was still some good chow, upon which I promptly pounced.

While loading up my plate, I was advised that I had been nominated for Vice President. Oh, brother! My first reaction was "that just made my day," even though I sorta expected to be nominated for something like, uh. . . well, I'll let your imagination come up with that one! Anyway, on a serious note, I consider it a privilege to be a Club member in good standing, and I look forward to contributing to the Club and helping to make next year a fun one!



Racers Tech Session

by Stevan Thomas

■ Bottom ends: Something's gotta give

If anyone knows how to blow up bottom ends, it's Oregon racer and engine builder Mike Farrell.

Farrell, who has raced Nortons for over twenty years and re-built dozens of motors for himself and customers, was kind enough to share that experience with me over several phone conversations, in which he offered invaluable insight into building a better bottom end.

Although his advice seems most applicable to racers (and flies in the face of conventional wisdom), it's actually relevant to any street rider who uses his Norton up to 7,000 RPM, even if only occasionally.

The basic concept, according to Farrell, is this: at top RPM, Norton crankshafts flex more than what dual Super-Blends and reinforced crankcases will allow. It is better to allow the crank to flex than to try to control it. The best way to accomplish this is to use a Super-Blend on the drive side and an extra-capacity ball bearing on the timing side.

Farrell had a shop for 20 years and used to rebuild Nortons for customers. Of about sixty motors he saw with dual Super-Blends, as many as eight showed signs of bearing failure to one degree or another.

"In the worst one I've ever seen,

just about everything in the timing case was wrecked," he says. "I know all sorts of things can contribute to bearing failure, including one good over-rev. If you skid a bearing just once, it's on its way out."

"If you've ever seen a broken set of 850 cases with dual Super-Blends in them," Farrell continues, "you have to ask yourself, 'If these are the best bearings and the strongest cases, why did they break?'"

If it's a motor that got revved up pretty regularly, the most likely reason is simply that the Super-Blend bearings allowed only a limited amount of crank flex. Does this limiting stop the crank from flexing? No, it can't: the crank is flexible and is going to flex as much as it wants to. Period.

So, with the Super-Blends in place, the crank flexes, and the bearings allow some flex, but when the crank flexes more than the bearings can absorb, the additional flex is transmitted to the aluminum crankcase.

The crankcase must flex because it is not strong enough *not* to flex. If the cases are rigid enough that they don't want to flex, they crack, sooner or later. If the cases were made of some miracle material that was absolutely rigid and would never break, the bearing would fail so fast

(continued)

you wouldn't believe it.

Farrell's point? Given all this, it seems logical that the stronger your cases are, the more sense it makes to put a ball bearing on the timing side for high-RPM work.

Racers in the know prefer to use early 750 cases, as their thinner walls tolerate a certain amount of flex.

Farrell concurs.

"I know one well-known drag-racer with a multi-engine machine who will only use 1969 cases".

He says that a typical pre-1972 factory set up was a standard (non-Super-Blend) roller on the drive side, and a standard ball on the timing side. The timing side ball did not last as long as the roller, because with a standard roller on the drive side, most of the flex goes through the ball on the timing side and it just can't wear as long as the roller. In fact, even if the rollers have worn evenly, it is not uncommon to see that the shaft under the bearing has been damaged due to flex, especially if the ball is worn.

The best way to repair this is to have the shaft hard-chrome plated and ground. Just don't forget to bake the plated piece in the oven at 250 degrees for an hour to prevent hydrogen embrittlement (even if your plater says he did it, it's easy enough to do it again to make sure).

In 1972, Norton switched to two roller bearings on the crank, perhaps because factory engineers were thinking, "Well, the rollers are lasting pretty well, but the balls are wearing out, so let's put in two of the

rollers".

Farrell was there first.

"Long before they did this, I thought it was a good idea, even though an old racer who ran Nortons at Daytona told me I'd be sorry if I did it. It didn't last too long before I had it apart again and realized he was right! I haven't seen a single 1972 Norton that got more than about 5,000 miles before it had main bearing failure."

"The factory fixed an awful lot of those under warranty and it cost them a quite a bit of money."

That's why, Farrell says, Norton commissioned a bearing house to develop the Super-Blend. It's "exotic for a bearing," he says, but "a definite step in the right direction. It's really good for most motors, though it's not necessarily a cure-all for every situation."

Other crank parts can contribute to flex as well. Farrell offered his observations about crankshaft bolts.

He frequently describes the ones that hold the cranks to the flywheel as being "like little rubber bands."

"I've used grade-eight bolts, but ended up preferring the factory parts. If you torque the stock bolts properly, you don't get any thread stretch, but they still pretty obviously stretch. You can see it from the way oil seeps out between the crank and the flywheel. I've gone so far as to experiment with using a Loctite product to 'glue' the cranks to the flywheel, and oil still seeps out!"

Farrell has worked on crankshafts on which the cast flywheels disintegrated but the bolts did not

fail. Bolt reliability is entirely dependent on fit, Farrell says. Bolts must be a light-drive or tap-fit into their holes.

Another thing he says racers have tried is changing the diameter of the bolts to a larger size. This does stiffen up the crank assembly, but causes crank failure. Instead of flexing, the crank breaks by the big-end journals.

A part that doesn't contribute to flex, but still merits attention, is the flywheel.

Farrell agrees.

"Any kind of steel flywheel would be better than the cast one used by Norton: not because it's stiffer, but because you eliminate the possibility that it will grenade on you!"

He had some steel flywheels made for his race motors last year, and by next summer will probably be set up to make them for sale.

So, back to bearings. What Farrell does on his race motors is to use a Super-Blend on the drive side and an extra-capacity ball (with ten balls instead of eight) on the timing side. The Torrington/Fafnir number for this bearing is 306W.

It's a great setup: the drive side roller allows some flex, the timing side ball allows some flex (the two extra balls help the bearing to last longer) and Farrell's early cases allow some flex.

"We are getting almost unlimited mileage on the Super-Blends," he says. "I haven't changed them in four seasons."

As a precaution, he does change the timing side balls every year,

which you don't need to do on a street motor.

Bear in mind that the crank flexes the most at high RPMs. If you baby your motor and never rev it over 5,500 or 6,000 RPM, chances are you won't have a problem with two Super-Blends. But, as Farrell jokes, "I don't know too many Norton riders who don't run their bikes sort of hard, at least occasionally!"

When you go to inspect your own bearings, clean all the oil off them, and use good light and magnifying glass. Worn-out bearings look pretty good with a light coating of used oil on them.

Farrell concludes, "When you think about putting out 60 h.p. at the crank, with all that weight that is out of balance most of the time, you realize what tremendous stresses are being generated in that bottom end of yours. It's amazing that the bottom-ends hold together as well as they do!"

There are plenty of opinions out there, and this is part of how I formed mine. Even though I've talked to countless racers, bearing specialists, engineers and other experts, I find that owning, riding and racing Nortons is a life-long learning experience!"

Mike Farrell and Dick Slusher brought a brace of RedLine framed Nortons to the Dirt Track racing event at the National Rally in Quincy last August. If you want to talk to Mike about bottom ends, or are interested in his steel flywheels, give him a call at (503) 637-3410. He hasn't priced the flywheels yet, but says they'll be "affordable."

Points Update

■ August Meeting

Nortons (6 points)

John Covell
Dana Muise
George Poore
Mike Sullivan

Non-British makes (2 points)

Mike Vetter

Other (1 point)

Frank Holden
Jerry Kaplan
Maya Lai

September meeting points should be in the next issue.

■ Rally

Alan Goldwater is seeking an enthusiastic volunteer to go through Rally registration sheets so we know who participated. Anyone interested? Call him!

■ Old Timers Ride

Nortons (6 points)

Harry Bunting
Jim Carton
Alan Goldwater
Jeff Gruwell
Davis Hedges
Jerry Kaplan
Phil Radford
Mike Sullivan
Stevan Thomas

Other British makes (4 points)

Don Danmeier - Ariel twin
Neil Kelly - new Triumph
Pat Munroe - new Triumph

Other (1 point)

Maya Lai - food wagon

All in all, there were 11 Commandos, one Ariel twin, two Triumph twins, one Model 50, one A-10 BSA, one Suzuki Water Buffalo, one Honda 500 four, and two new Triumphs. Not bad!



Riders Tech Session

■ Battery sulfation

Several years ago, a wise old man told me how to keep my bike battery in tip-top shape. One mistake people make when caring for their batteries is to charge the battery before running it dead first. If you charge a partially charged battery, sulfate forms on the plates, suffocating the battery and severely shortening its life.

If it has been a while since you used your bike, connect the battery (assuming you disconnected it when you put the bike away) and turn the headlight on until the battery goes dead. The best way to charge a battery is with low amps (5) over a long period of time, usually several days. **REMEMBER, NEVER, NEVER LEAVE A BATTERY CHARGER CONNECTED TO AN UNATTENDED BATTERY.** If you must do so, put the battery and charger outside, out of the weather, where they cannot cause any damage.

One morning I was at Sears in Houston getting a tire fixed when I witnessed a battery exploding in the service area. A mechanic hooked the battery up with live leads, and ignited fumes from it. They carted him away in an ambulance with sulfuric acid burns all over his body. He literally became a Diehard!

This item was published in Don Stanford's column in the Northern New England Norton Owners newsletter in May, 1996.

■ More on tools

Member Art Sirota recently spent a week touring Oregon with the Velocette Owners Club on his 1970 Norton 750. It occurred to him that a list of essential tools, including the following, might be helpful.

- Roll of electrical tape
- Small flashlight
- Spark plug wrench
- Four-in-one screwdriver
- Spare electronic ignition (if fitted)
- Inner tube or patch kit
- Tire levers
- Air pressure guage
- Cable ties
- Feeler guages
- Spanners
- One adjustable wrench
- One set allen wrenches
- Volt meter
- Spare spark plugs
- Wire brush
- Repair manual with electric schematic
- Chain lube
- Fuses
- Clutch and throttle cables

Art says this stuff took up surprisingly little room in his saddlebags.

"I know I've left something out. What could it have been? Oh--bring your VISA card!"

It would be fun to take a peek into members' tool kits to see what you all actually carry around. What favorite little tools do you carry?

September Meeting Minutes

■ Northern California Norton Owners Club September 12, 1996 meeting, Harry's Hofbrau, Mountain View

The meeting was called to order at 8 p.m. with fourteen members and three guests present.

We discussed voting for Club Officers by mail ballot. After suitable discussion, a motion was made to change the By-laws to allow voting for Officers by mail ballot. The motion passed.

We discussed the Old Timer's Ride, which most present planned to attend.

It was stated that the Club has about \$1,200 in the treasury.

Thanks were again given to the people who helped with the Rally.

The meeting was adjourned.

Club Meeting Schedule

The Club meets the second Thursday of each month at 8 p.m.

Oct. 10 **Connecticut Yankee**
100 Connecticut Street
San Francisco
(415) 552-4440

Nov. 14 **Prince of Wales Pub**
106 E. 25th Avenue
San Mateo
(415) 574-9723

Classified

ADVERTISEMENTS

We actively encourage non-Club members to post ads to sell Norton motorcycles, Norton parts and Norton-specific services. Ads will also be placed on our new Internet site, at <http://ru486.hypno.com~norton>. If you sell something either way, please cancel your ad! Tell anyone you know who would like to use these services.

■ FOR SALE

1951 Model 7 Dominator basket case, complete except for front fender. \$1,500. 1970 Commando Interstate, professional restoration 90% complete. \$2,500. 1962 Matchless 600cc G80TCS Typhoon basket case. Carillo rod, Alpha big end, correct aluminum competition tank, correct air cleaner box. \$3,000. 1971 Enfield Metisse. 750cc/365lb curb weight, 551 miles on clock, fewer than 200 made. \$8,500.

Mostly British (916) 920-1648 or (916) 927-2748 (01/97)

■ FOR SALE

Knobbies! Bridgestone rear tires: 100/90-19, 110/90-19, 120/90-19. List \$70 - \$80, only \$50 each. Dunlop fronts: K490 80/100-21, K139 Moto-X 3.00-21. List \$70, only \$50 each. Formula brand (Taiwan) 3.25-19. \$15.
Stevan Thomas (415) 923-1662 (01/97)

■ WANTED

Norton Commando SS pipes. Anything Dunstall. Fairings.
Sergio (415) 487-9125 (01/97)

■ SERVICE AVAILABLE

Thinking about buying a Commando or other British bike? I can help you determine what the bike needs to become reliable. See me before or after you buy! I also do maintenance and provide instruction. Reasonable rates. **Jim (510) 483-2045** (12/96)

■ SERVICE AVAILABLE

On all Norton cylinders we've seen, the top face is out of square with the base by about .006". We grind this flat and square with the cylinder base, providing a good surface for head gasket sealing. We can also resurface Norton tappets (cam followers). Short turnaround, provided all four tappets are serviceable. The entire job takes an hour to an hour-and-a-half, or \$65 to \$97, plus C.O.D. and/or U.P.S. charges. **Kinetic Analysis (415) 472-6661** (12/96)

■ WANTED

Late 750 Commando frame, 850 braced swing arm, '69 or '70 B-44 motor, Sebring Electronic ignition parts.
Chris (415) 965-4611 (10/96)

■ FOR SALE

1975 Mark III Interstate with 27,016 miles on the clock. Dunstall mufflers, non-stock turn signals and the electric starter works! Black steel tank with red Norton lettering. This bike runs well and will be sold soon. \$3,200.
Munroe Motors (415) 626-3496,
ask for Pat. (12/96)

■ FOR SALE

Amal Mark I 1/2 carburetors. Get rid of your choke cables and still have a choke! Looks like a Mark I, but has

Mark II lever choke and large-bore float needle. \$110 ea.

Mostly British (916) 927-2748
(12/96)

■ FOR SALE

Redline synthetic oil (20W50) at dealer cost. \$6/quart or \$72/case, plus tax and shipping. Protect your Norton with the best oil made!
Alan (408) 475-7505 (12/96)

■ FOR SALE

N.O.S. Dunstall 810cc and 850cc alloy cylinders. N.O.S. Druin supercharger.
Mostly British (916) 927-2748 (12/96)

■ FOR SALE

1970 Production Racer replica. All-new yellow bodywork, lots of fresh powdercoating, belt drive, Brembo master cylinder. Good-looking bike, and a very strong runner. \$6,500
Mostly British (916) 927-2748 (12/96)

■ FOR SALE OR TRADE

Cleaning the Gruwell garage. Have several steel Roadster tanks and Roadster seats, will trade for other Norton stuff, tools, music CDs or ??
Jeff Gruwell (510) 432-9999 (10/96)

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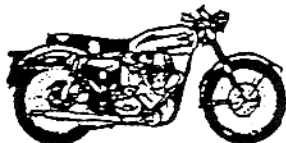
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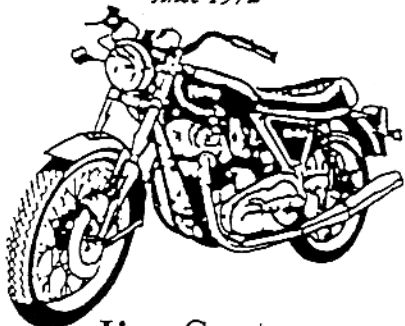


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