



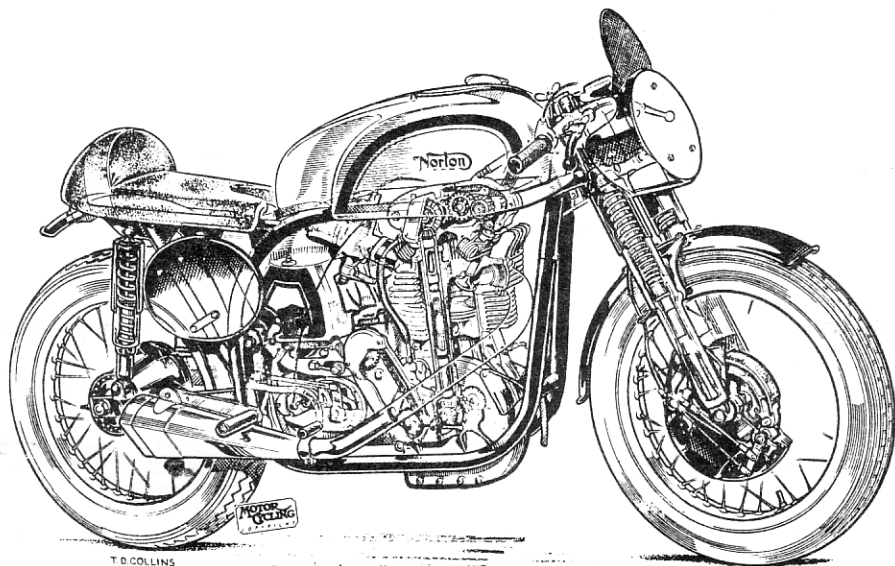
# Norton Notice



The Newsletter of The Northern California Branch

Volume 2 Issue 11

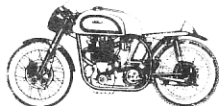
November 1979



SECTIONED DRAWING OF ONE OF THE LAST CATALOGUED MANX NORTON FIVE-HUNDREDS. SLUNG LOW IN THE DUPLEX-LOOP FRAME, THE MANX ENGINE HAD TWO PAIRS OF BEVELS AND FIVE SPUR GEARS IN THE CAMSHAFT DRIVE. DOUBLE LEADING SHOES WERE USED IN THE FRONT

Published monthly by the  
Northern California Branch  
Norton Owners Club





The **NORTON NOTICE** is published monthly by the Northern California Branch of the NOC.

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## Advertising

Current and prospective members may place Norton-related ads in the **TRADING POST** by writing the pertinent information in as concise a form as possible and sending it to the Editor. Ads will normally run for two months, but may be renewed should the advertiser so desire. There will be no fee for any advertisement in the **TRADING POST**.

Commercial enterprises may advertise their goods and/or services in the **NORTON NOTICE** for a nominal fee, which will help offset printing costs and thereby support the Northern California Branch of the NOC.

Commercial advertising rates are:

	1 issue	3 issues	6 issues
1/4 page	\$5.00	\$13.50	\$25.00
1/2 page	\$9.00	\$25.00	\$45.00

## Input Wanted

Members and other readers are encouraged to submit to the Editor anything at all of general interest to Norton enthusiasts. The Editor will welcome any articles (original or otherwise), technical information, jokes, cartoons, travelogues, comments, photographs, or whatever else you might have that other readers would enjoy seeing, and will try to get everything in sooner or later. Please try to make handwritten items legible, if at all possible, and include a self-addressed envelope if you want your goodies returned. This is your newsletter, and your input is important. Please send it to the Editor.

ODD BODKINS (Reprinted with permission)



NOTE: Membership cards are here at last!!!

Let me know if you need one. Steve

## Membership Information

There are three categories of membership in the Northern California Branch of the NOC:

**FULL MEMBERS:** Full members are dues-paying members of the NOC, and therefore have full voting privileges at any general meeting of the NOC and all branch meetings, and also any privileges resulting from affiliation of the Club with any other organization. Full members must pay annual dues to the NOC in England (paid through the Secretary), in return for which they will receive the bi-monthly **ROADHOLDER** magazine, and may use the NOC Spares Scheme at any time.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS:** This category was set up so that any Norton owner wishing to get the **NORTON NOTICE** each month and be associated with the Northern California Branch can do so for a very modest fee, without having to join the NOC as a full member. Associate members do not pay NOC dues, and therefore do not have all the privileges of full NOC members. They do, however, have full voting privileges at all Northern California Branch meetings, and are equally welcome at all of the rides, meetings, and other functions sponsored by the branch.

**SOCIAL MEMBERS:** In order to allow Norton enthusiasts who do not own a Norton to be associated with the club, and thereby help them to find one to buy, the branch provides the category of 'Social Membership'. Social members do not have any voting privileges, but are otherwise welcome to participate in all branch activities. Social members will receive the **NORTON NOTICE** each month, and are encouraged to follow up on any leads regarding Norton motorcycles for sale. The Editor will try to help all social members in this regard, and would appreciate any help from other members.

## CURRENT DUES PAID AND PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED:

	PAY:	RECEIVE:
FULL MEMBERS:	\$25	<b>NORTON NOTICE</b> & <b>ROADHOLDER</b>
ASSOC. MEMBERS:	\$5	<b>NORTON NOTICE</b>
SOCIAL MEMBERS:	\$5	<b>NORTON NOTICE</b>

## Meetings and Rides

Northern California Branch meetings are held on the second Thursday evening of each month at a location announced in the newsletter.

Branch rides are generally held on the next Sunday, meeting at 10AM at a location also announced in the **NORTON NOTICE**. In the event of rain, the ride will be postponed a week.

## November Meeting: Palo Alto

The Northern California Branch meeting for the month of November will be on Thursday the 15th beginning at 7:30 PM. The venue this time will be Barrington's (formerly Bess and the Beef-eater) in downtown Palo Alto. Take University Avenue from Hwy.101 or El Camino Real, go to Emerson Street and turn north. Barrington's is one block up on Emerson, and there is good parking for Nortons in the parking lot across the street. The manager has promised to have complimentary hors d'oeuvres for us and draft beers will be half-price (!) until 9 o'clock.

Since there is live music at Barrington's from 9 on, I hope to have the "business" part of the meeting as early as possible. If you want to enjoy the goodies and/or participate in the stimulating discussions we always have at our meetings, please come on time.

**TENTATIVE AGENDA:** Club Christmas Party (?)  
1980 Norton Rally plans  
USNOA California Chapter

DATE: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH  
TIME: 7:30 PM  
PLACE: BARRINGTON'S  
414 EMERSON STREET  
PALO ALTO  
(415)325-4052



## November Ride: Mt. Hamilton

This month's ride is scheduled for Sunday the 18th, and let's hope the weather will prove favorable. In the event of actual rain on the morning of the ride, it will automatically be postponed one week until the 25th. If in doubt about the weather, please call Steve on Sunday morning (not before 7 o'clock PLEASE!).

We will meet at 10:00 AM at the Howard Johnson Restaurant in San José. Take the First Street exit off the Bayshore Freeway (Hwy.101), and you'll see HoJo's right in front of you. Plan to be there no later than 10:30 or we'll have left. The plan for this ride is to go up the west side of Mount Hamilton (a great Norton road with many twisty turns and a spectacular view of the Santa Clara valley), stop up at the top by the Observatory, and then head down the east side to a great little bar and grill for lunch. After that, who knows? Be sure to wear something warm....it can get pretty cold up at the top of Mt. Hamilton this time of the year. A downvest and longjohns would be good.

DATE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 18TH  
(one week later if rain)  
TIME: 10:00 AM  
PLACE: HOJO'S  
1ST. STREET EXIT AT HWY.101  
SAN JOSE

The last time we had a club ride scheduled for this run (July), I was in Maine on vacation, and found out when I returned that only two people had met at HoJo's that day. I also hear that it rained that day! Rain in California in July? Well....let's hope for better this time.

## Events

DATE	TIME	PLACE	EVENT
11-15 THURS.	7:30 PM	BARRINGTON'S PALO ALTO	NOVEMBER NO.CAL. BRANCH MEETING
11-18 SUN.	10:00 AM	HOJO'S First St. SAN JOSE	NOVEMBER NO.CAL. BRANCH RIDE to MOUNT HAMILTON!!
11-18 SUN.	ALL DAY	SEARS PT. RACEWAY	ENDURANCE RACE & CLASSIC MC SHOW
12-13 THURS.	7:30 PM	EDINBURGH CASTLE,SF	DECEMBER NO.CAL. BRANCH MEETING
12-16 SUN.	10:00 AM	SAUSALITO HOTEL	DECEMBER RIDE to NICK'S COVE REST.

## Norton Christmas Bash!

Rumor has it that another Northern California Branch Christmas party is in the works, and that Maya Peterson is organizing it. Those who missed last year's gala event should do whatever you have to in order to get to this year's. Maya is currently contacting some of the San Francisco area members to find out if Friday the 14th would be better than Thursday the 13th, the date of our scheduled meeting. I have already reserved the meeting room at the Edinburgh Castle for both nights, so we should have no problem either way.

If you would like to give Maya your preference or if you're willing to help her with getting the party together, please call Maya soon.

MAYA PETERSON  
(415) 885-6769

I for one enjoyed the Christmas Party last year immensely, and look forward to another great time this year. With some help from a few of you, I'm sure we can produce a real SNORTON bash! The owner of Edinburgh Castle seems delighted to have us do the party there again, and asked only that we buy all our alcoholic beverages from them. We are perfectly free to bring in whatever we like in the way of food, etc. Maya suggested that some good boogie music (no disco, I hope!) would liven things up a lot, so if anyone has a sound system suitable for the occasion and would be interested in providing the tunes, here's your chance to play D.J.! The pay is lousy, but I know the appreciation of your fellow Norton enthusiasts would make up for it.

Look for a complete report on the party plans in the December **NORTON NOTICE**. In the meantime please give Maya a call and tell whether you'd prefer Thursday or Friday, and especially let her know if you can bring something that night or help her in any other way. Thanks. *Steve*

## Sears Point Endurance: Nov.18

Gary Broeder has informed me that this year the Endurance Race at Sears Point will be two one hundred mile legs, thus making it quite a lot easier to compete in and finish. They are expecting it to be very exciting again. I know that anyone who enjoys road racing will find this event well worth the trip up to the raceway just south of Sonoma. As a special added attraction, Gary tells me, there will be a display and/or race of some sort for those ever-popular classic motorcycles. NOV.18TH!

## Trading Post

All ads for the TRADING POST should be written (legibly), and given or mailed to the NN Editor. Thankyou all for your cooperation. It's appreciated.

STEVE COBURN  
P.O. BOX 236  
LA HONDA, CA  
94020

### ~ For Sale ~

1975 Norton Commando MkIII Interstate. Purchased new in 1977. New tires, oil cooler, FIAMM horns, steering damper, quartz-halogen headlight, and extra parts. Very good condition. \$1600/offer.

DAVE DEMMA  
(415) 326-7735 (HOME)  
(415) 368-1465 (WORK)

1975 Norton Commando MkIII Roadster. Black with gold pinstriping, electric start, 700 original miles. \$2295.

ALEX McLEAN  
(415) 924-0327

1975 Norton Commando MkIII Interstate. Only 6000 miles. Primo condition! \$1800 or best offer.

DAVID NEAL  
544 PACIFIC AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
(415) 788-7283 (DAYS)

1974 John Player Norton. Totally stock and in excellent condition. Must sell. Make an offer.

JAY BLANCHARD  
SAN MATEO, CA  
(415) 574-8844

1973 Norton Commando 850 Roadster. Black with gold pinstriping. Needs minor work. \$800.

GREGG ACKER  
REDWOOD CITY, CA  
(415) 366-1290 (WEEKDAYS AFTER 4PM)

1969 Norton Atlas 750. Runs. \$400.

HAROLD BRUM  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
(415) 626-8679 (WORK)  
(415) 584-1243 (HOME)

1969 Norton N15 750. Semi-chopped with lots of chromed stock parts. \$1200 or best offer.

DENNIS REED  
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA  
(415) 965-2721 (LEAVE MESSAGE)

New auto-advance unit for early Commando (with points mounted behind the barrels). Also fits Triumph 500 and 650 twins. \$25

New chrome-plated Girling springs for rear Commando shocks (126lb. rating). \$15

Used set of slash tip mufflers in excellent condition, with clamps, 1 3/8" inlet. \$15

New set of Wassel megaphone-type mufflers, 1 3/8" inlet. \$50

GENE AUSTIN  
SAN MATEO, CA  
(415) 573-9559

### ~ Wanted ~

Any pre-Commando Nortons, basket cases, parts.

ALEX McLEAN  
(415) 924-0327

Side stand to fit featherbed frame, early Commando and featherbed exhaust lockrings, complete slimline featherbed rolling chassis in reasonable condition.

GENE AUSTIN  
(415) 573-9559

Foot peg for '56 Dominator 99 (primary side).

MAYA PETERSON  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
(415) 885-6769

## October Meeting Report

The October Northern California Branch meeting, held at Edinburgh Castle in San Francisco on the 18th, was quite interesting, to say the least. About twenty or so members showed up for a lively discussion about the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposed Northern California Chapter of the USNOA. Mark Gribble, in particular, spoke out against the idea, saying in essence that we already have an active Norton club here in the bay area, with more than enough meetings to attend. He feels that it would just dilute what we have now to start another "club" with meetings of its own. I hope that's a fairly accurate synopsis of Mark's point of view. Several other members seemed to agree with Mark, and said that rather than start an active USNOA chapter in Northern California, we should simply encourage Norton owners in the area to join the USNOA so that they can be on its mailing list and get its newsletter, the NORTON NEWS, and just let it go at that.

The vast majority of the members present, however, seemed to agree with me that the USNOA members and other interested Norton owners here might want to have a local chapter, and it could be done without "diluting" our NOC branch in any way. As everyone is well aware by now, my personal goal is to get the USNOA and the NOC together in some form, but I see no good reason to rush it. I'm sure that will come with time; it's only logical.

Another point of discussion at the meeting was brought up by Gene Austin and concerns "editorial comments" by yours truly in the NORTON NOTICE. It is Gene's opinion, apparently, that some (if not all) of the comments I'm putting in the NN, are not only not funny, but also inappropriate. On the basis of the snickers and comments I heard from others present, Gene didn't have many others who agreed with his opinion. I stated my feelings and I feel no differently now a week later. The Editor of a newsletter has every right to print what he wants to, and anyone who doesn't like it has a very simple choice: either don't read it or offer to do a better job. Since Gene has no interest in doing the NORTON NOTICE himself, I would suggest that he just read it as it is, or not read it all. But please stop belly-aching all the time, Gene. It's really getting pretty boring. Actually, since I will only be doing one more issue, I suggest you wait 'til the January '80 issue comes out, and then you can decide whether the editorial style of Dick Swanson, Mike Heth and Brian Halton is more to your liking. In any event, you won't have to complain to me any more, and I won't have to tell you why I do what I do. Thank God!

Well, that's about it. Sorry if I left anything important out. *Steve*

## October Ride Report

Last month's ride should have been a week earlier! I'm told the weather in the Sierra Mountains was outstanding that weekend, and no doubt we'd have had a great time.

Unfortunately, we went on the 20th, and as luck would have it, that weekend brought the first snowstorm of the year to the Sierras. Although the weather was quite nice when I left La Honda and rode up the peninsula to San Francisco, it soon turned very ominous-looking, and as we were crossing the bridge the rain started. On the other side of the bridge we found Alex Stewart and John Padilla and his brother huddling under what was available in the way of shelter, and seemingly asking themselves why they'd bothered. As it began to look even worse in the east, Alex decided to turn around and head back home. As John and his brother, and Kathy and I waited for a sign of hope, Tom Horton and Harvey Loucks rode up, and we figured we had a ride! The sky started clearing and we were off.

We hadn't gotten more than 20 or 30 miles down the road before the rain started again. When it really began to get bad we pulled off the highway (I-80), gassed up, and then holed up in a HoJo's. When the skies finally cleared a bit, we took off again, but before we got to Sacramento we were blessed a third time. Seemed as though we were playing hide-and-seek with the rain storm. We pulled into Norm Kelley's driveway, saw that there were two other Nortons there, and were glad for the welcome shelter Norm and Pat had for us. After the bikes had been covered and all the wet clothes hung in the kitchen to dry, the situation began to look a bit brighter. Once we'd warmed up some, the beer (of which Norm had a very ample supply for us) started to look good, and we all sat around talking and having a good Norton time. Among other interesting subjects, we discussed the Sacramento Norton contingent, and decided that there is enough interest in that part of the state to warrant an organized group of some sort. The members present (Norm, Mike Gaffney, and Dave Hoffman) seemed to agree that there is nothing to be gained by starting a new Branch of the NOC. Instead, they will try to get together from time to time, since our meetings are always in the bay area and therefore not particularly convenient for Sacramento area members. Norm volunteered, I think, to act as a coordinator of the group up there, and so he's the person to contact if you're in the area and interested in participating in their activities. Norm's home phone number is (916)441-0898. Give him a call sometime.

After we'd all had enough beer for a while, and checked out Norm's motorcycle "museum" behind the garage (you won't believe what it is unless you see it!), we all headed down into Sacramento and Hall-Burdette's. Needless to say, Mrs. Burdette had quite a nice spread of goodies for us, and we had a fine time stuffing ourselves and talking with all the Norton nuts there. A slide show of the Colorado trip, the last two CAMA rallies, and the beer bust this year was enjoyed by all. Thanks again to the Burdettes and the crew up there for their fine hospitality! We really had a great time and hope that you'll come down our way sometime so that we get a chance to return the favor.

## Oct.28 Report



## Mixed Results

A very healthy-looking group of Nortons (which I estimated to number about 20) showed up on Sunday morning Oct.28th at Alice's Restaurant. It was a perfect fall morning for riding up in the redwoods, and it was great that the crowd at Skyllonda corners got a chance to see all the fine Nortons. Everyone had a good time there, having breakfast or talking with the other CNNs or both, but finally around 11 o'clock we were able to get most of the group together and out on the road. We rode north on Skyline to Hwy92, threaded our way through the tourist traffic en route to Half Moon Bay, and finally ended up at the Miramar Beach Inn. Over beer and lunch the remaining 15 or so discussed the idea of starting a USNOA Chapter here. The general consensus of opinion was that it might not be a bad idea, providing its meetings, etc. be scheduled so as to coincide with the NOC meetings. Unfortunately, nobody seemed interested in helping out, so I guess I'll just leave it at that. Anyone who is not already a member is encouraged to join the USNOA (ask me for info. if you want it) and thus get the NORTON NEWS if/when it comes out. Sorry Pete and Linda...since we still haven't seen your July/August issue I just couldn't resist that opportunity to give you an incentive! After we all had enough of everything the Miramar had to offer, the group headed south on the coast highway for an enjoyable and speedy run, before splitting up and heading home. *Steve*

The weather reports we'd been listening to on the radio all afternoon had convinced us that a ride in the mountains would be foolhardy. It was snowing and/or raining everywhere and the only road across the mountains that was still open was I-80. Although Norm had mapped out a large variety of possible ride routes for us, we decided to forego this time and just spend the night in Sacramento. Boring, but dry! We all went down to a little Chinese restaurant (The Hong Kong Café) that Norm and Pat always go to, and proceeded to have a real feast. I know I'd hoped to be eating around a campfire in the mountains somewhere, but this was good. After some more Norton BSing back at Norm's, we all crashed wherever we could find a spot.

Sunday morning I awoke to the smell of coffee in the kitchen and bright sunshine beaming in through the window. Norm had picked up a big bag of doughnuts for us and we all had more than enough. I'd like to thank Norm and Pat for their much appreciated hospitality. Soon we headed off once again, Tom on I-80 eastbound for a week's vacation on his Norton in Death Valley and vicinity, and the rest of us back to the west. We took the back roads from Davis to Lake Berryessa, and then Harvey, and Kathy and I rode up the Silverado Trail (somewhere in there splitting off from John and his brother). We were sorry to find Bernie and Cathy Birleffi not home when we stopped at their home in Calistoga, but pressed on anyway and ended up in Tomales at Charlie Taylor's place. It was fun to spend some time there admiring Charlie's beautiful International and Vincents (as well as some other older machines he was working on). After a good meal in Inverness, it was a quick, enjoyable run back home again. *Steve*

## NOC News: Peter Thistle

This page marks a NORTON NOTICE first, a new column I should have started a long time ago. Herein will appear the latest NOC news.

I recently received a nice letter from Peter Thistle, the Secretary of the NOC, who writes to the Branch Secretaries from time to time, and keeps us more or less up to date on what the Club and its Executive Committee have been up to. His most recent letter, which appears below, also included a complete list of the newly elected Committee. These Officers, some of whom were re-elected from the 1978-1979 Committee, will serve for the next year, and they are the people you should write to in the event that you want Club information not available locally. I plan to correspond with some of the Committee members on a regular basis, in an effort to get the best service for the Northern California Branch. In any event, here is Peter's letter:

Dear Steve: 11 Oct., 1979

Thanks for the copies of Norton Notice. I see you have roped in Carl Mazel to dispense technical advice. I have been corresponding with Carl since the beginning of the year; an arch Norton enthusiast and a Gentleman of the first order.

My apologies for not writing sooner, but I live in an ever increasing mountain of Club papers, letters from four corners of the Earth, circulars from people trying to sell us something, and sundry other items which all require attention.

Adrian Page and Wendy enjoyed their holiday enormously, and are going to do a write-up for Roadholder hopefully.

I will pass the photos on to our new Editor as he may like to put them in Roadholder. A man I work with loves steam railways, so I showed him the Silverton photo. He thought the bikes were spoiling a good shot of the train! (See NN cover, Sept.-Ed.)

I hear from Ron Moore that you want to give Club membership cards to your branch social members. I am not in favour of this at all, as I consider this an Owners club, and therefore anyone who is not an owner of a Norton is not eligible to join, and therefore not entitled to a membership card.

In England, social members do not get a Club card, but branches sometimes issue a social member's card that is not at all like the member's card and clearly states "Social Member". I don't see that we would have any objection to your branch doing the same, though they should, I feel, use your badge rather than the general Club badge.

When Ron read your letter out it sounded as if you were going to have forgeries of the official card made; I hope this is not the case, as we all feel that this card is exclusively for full Club members. I expect Adrian and perhaps Ron will be commenting upon the same subject.

I have included an up-to-date list of the Committee for your records.

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Thistle*

## The NOC Committee 1979/80

### NORTON OWNERS CLUB

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1979/80

CHAIRMAN	- Adrian Page Blossom Hill Cottage Tedburn St. Mary, Nr. Exeter Devon EX6 6AZ ENGLAND
SECRETARY	- Peter Thistle 30 Rosehill Avenue Sutton, Surrey ENGLAND
TREASURER	- Mike Bragg 110 Drayton Wood Road Hellesdon, Norwich Norfolk, ENGLAND
PUBLIC RELATIONS	- Chris Vincent 124 Stanstead Road Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 0RN ENGLAND
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	- John McCombe 66 Vicarage Lane U.K. ASSOCIATE Kings Langley Hertfordshire, ENGLAND
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	- Ron Moore 16 Walnut Drive Branch AND Witham, Essex CM8 2ST OVERSEAS ENGLAND
MAGAZINE EDITOR	- Al Tritton 51 Coach Road, Hamble Southampton, Hants. ENGLAND
MAGAZINE DISTRIBUTOR	- Dave Catton 252 Ingram Avenue Aylesbury, Bucks. ENGLAND
RECORD UPDATING	- Kay Hunnam Beaulieu Cottage, Lower Dicker Hailsham, Sussex, ENGLAND
EVENTS	- Colin Sharpe 62 Station Street, Chatteris Cambridgeshire, ENGLAND
SPARES (LISTED ONLY)	- Les Emery 5 Bracken Way, Rugeley Staffordshire, ENGLAND
SPARES (UNLISTED TWINS)	- Terry Foley 20 Mallard Close, Lodge Park Snettisham, Kings Lynn Norfolk, ENGLAND
TECH. ADVICE (TWINS AND ELECTRICAL)	- Alan Osborn 9 Chapel Road, Ealing London W.13, ENGLAND
TECH. ADVICE (SINGLES) AND UNLISTED	- Jan Griffiths Bodrhwi, Neigwl, Botwnnog, Pwllheli, <i>After been to America who gave pronounce this address!</i>
SINGLE SPARES	- Gwynedd, NORTH WALES
LIBRARIAN	- John Jordan 31 Walcot Avenue, Luton Bedfordshire, ENGLAND
EMERGENCY AID LIST	- Phil Cox The Flat, Old Bakery Rowde, Devizes Wiltshire, ENGLAND
OTHER MEMBERS	- Jon Switman 150 Greenford Avenue, Hanwell London W.7, ENGLAND
	- Roger Hunter 3 Branksome Place, Leeds 6 Yorkshire, ENGLAND



## Chris Vincent's Letter and Steve's Reactions to the Mail

I also received a letter recently from the new NOC Public Relations Officer, Chris Vincent. Here's what Chris has to say:

13 October, 1979

To all Branch Secretaries, U.S.A. & Canada:

At the recent AGM Hugh Cleary stepped down and I took over the job of Public Relations Officer of the NOC.

Firstly I would like to apologise for the 'Mass-Produced' nature of this introductory letter. However, I am studying for the final year of my degree in Film, and it takes quite a time to sit down and write letters to all 22 branches throughout the world. I can assure you that any future correspondence will receive my undivided personal attention.

I am not really sure how I can help you, but I am always open to any suggestions. Also, I am personally interested in your branch activities and would be grateful if you would keep me up to date on what you are doing.

You may be interested to know that I have opened up communication between the NOC and the Norton Motors 1978 company. They are sending all their press releases, details of which should appear in Roadholder.

I cannot think of much more at the moment but please PLEASE let me know if there is any way at all in which I can help you.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Vincent  
Public Relations Officer

I have written to both Peter and Chris, on behalf of the Northern California Branch, but I would encourage any interested member to write directly if so motivated. You might not totally agree with my point of view, and if you want yours to be known by the Committee Officers, please feel free to write to them.

In my letter to Peter Thistle I stressed the fact that our "associate" members are Norton owners, and not the same as the "social" members in England. Ron Moore seems to have a very difficult time figuring out our Branch's membership system, and has obviously given the Committee a very distorted impression of what we're doing. I explained to Peter that we have only four (4) "social" members at the present time, and that they did not receive membership cards. Should they purchase a Nort, they would then be "associate" members, and would be entitled to membership cards, etc.

I also stressed the fact that we had no intention of "forging" the NOC card. I really can't believe that Ron said that! All we had in mind was getting some cards made for the use of our Branch, and the general format of the NOC cards seemed like a good one to use. However, since it would be quite expensive on a cost per card basis to have our own printed, I told them (Ron Moore and Adrian Page) that we would like to use the NOC cards for our Associate members. I have made it very clear that we would be willing to buy a small stock of them at cost, and that any card given to an Associate member would clearly indicate that person's membership status in the Branch.

Quite frankly, it's a total mystery to me that Adrian Page didn't clarify the whole mess if he was present at the AGM. When we had our Branch meeting at Edinburgh Castle in August, he participated in the discussion of this same issue, and definitely should have spoken up at this AGM to let the other members of the Committee know our position. I plan to write to him about that.

I reemphasized to Peter the simple fact that the only reason our Associate members want cards is so that they can get the Club discount on parts at several local dealerships. Why that should make any difference to the NOC Committee is beyond me. I asked Peter to bring the matter up again at their next meeting, and to let me know their decision, but that in the meantime I would continue to give cards to members who request them.

In case some of you have wondered why I do not give cards to all members, the simple reason is that Ron Moore won't send us that many. Rather than just mail one out to each member who renews or joins, I have decided to give them to the people who want them. I know for a fact that some members could care less about the card, and never use theirs anyway. I trust that this "executive" decision on my part will not meet with too much disapproval, although I'm sure a couple of our more vocal members will want my head!

If anyone in the Branch is in the printing business, or knows of a printer who would do a batch of cards for us at a reasonable rate (i.e. CHEAP!), I encourage him/her to get in touch with me. We could go ahead and have a card printed with our own badge and all the pertinent information on it, and then we'd just forget this whole hassle with the NOC. Jeez! I'm almost starting to sound like one of those reactionary types! What next?

In my letter to Chris Vincent, I thanked him for his interest in the Branches over our side of the "pond", and asked him to try to get some good factory-authorized promotional material on the new Norton Rotary thing, and also some good test reports if available. I hope to hear from Chris in November and if he does send us some material on the Wankel, I will surely publish it in the December NN. Let's hope he gets something good with decent photographs, etc. Although I doubt I'd want to buy one of the things for \$7000 or whatever it is they're going for, I am nevertheless interested in the machine. Brian Slark, a member of the Branch, has actually ridden it and was impressed with certain aspects of the machine. Perhaps I'll get Brian to write a short blurb for the NN giving us his first-hand impressions after riding it.

Anyway, that was the only thing I asked Chris Vincent to do for us, but I would be happy to relay other requests, suggestions, etc. that any members might have. Please feel free to pass them on to me, or if you want to, write to Chris directly. I know he'd be glad to hear from our members, and I think he'd be willing to go out of his way on our behalf.

Please send any pertinent NOC-related items you'd like to see in this column to the NN Editor (Dick Swanson as of December). *Steve*

## The THIRD ANNUAL NORTON RALLY: Part 3: 'The Banquet'

This is the third and final part of my report on the USNOA's Rally in Colorado this August. Based on the number of positive comments I've received, it seems that many of you do enjoy reading about our ride to Woodland Park and the Rally itself. I only wish that more from the Northern California Branch had gone. Even though it's been two months now since I got back from the Rally, I am nevertheless still high on it and happy to give you these few impressions. I hope they're worth reading.

In part 2 of this report I went into the hill climb on Saturday morning in which some 75 or so Nortons went up to the 14,110 foot summit of Pikes Peak and back down again without one accident or breakdown (!), and then I reported on the wild "field events" held in Woodland Park that afternoon. After a bit of rest and relaxation back at the camp, we all set off en masse down the highway, this time for the famous Flying W Ranch, where we were to have an "authentic" chuckwagon dinner and also the annual "business meeting". Riding down that road from Woodland Park towards Colorado Spgs. in a double file stretching out for more than a mile was really quite a sight! Although I'd never actually witnessed a real Hell's Angels ride of the sort depicted in some of the old biker movies of the 60's, I couldn't help but feel that it must have been quite a lot like what our ride to dinner at the Flying W felt like to me. There were about 100 or so in the motorcade, and we held our formation all the way at a nice easy speed. Those who've never been riding in a large pack of bikes can only imagine what it felt like, but I can assure you the experience of being in the middle of all those

Nortons was a very exhilarating one for me! We got down to the Flying W in good shape, only to find a dozen tour buses and throngs of kids and little old ladies and other tourists all over the place. Needless to say, we'd ridden into a real tourist trap, and were immediately the center of everyone's attention. The Ranch "hands" in the parking lot directed us to an area that had been specially cleared for us, and we packed our hundred odd Nortons into it as best we could. We soon found ourselves at long tables in a central outdoor holding area waiting for the show to begin. While an M.C. of some sort welcomed everyone to the Flying W and told us all the history of the place, etc., I couldn't help but feel like a steer in a stockyard waiting to be slaughtered instead of a paying dinner guest at a "ranch".

We were soon ushered (herded?) into the area where we would "dine", and once again had to listen to some old windbag whose primary role seemed to be keeping us "entertained" while the kitchen crew got the food ready. It began to feel like the "feeding of the multitudes" and I wondered whether there would be enough food back there to feed all of us.

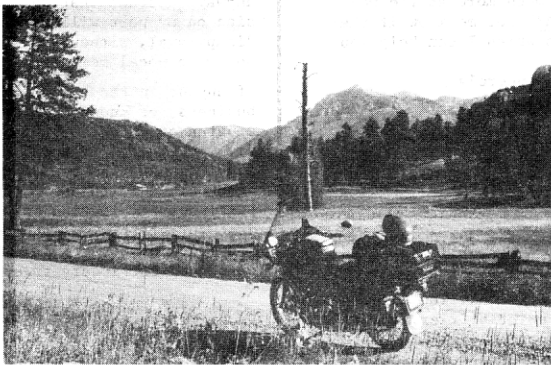
Surprisingly enough, there was more than enough food for all, and it was actually pretty good! While we were stuffing our faces with "authentic" chuckwagon grub, the Flying W cowboy band and a standup comedian/quickdraw artist were doing their best to keep us all entertained. All in all, we had a fine time there, laughing more at the utter absurdity of the situation than at any of the jokes being told up on the stage. At the end of dinner, after everyone had eaten more than wisdom would have dictated, and after all the tour bus crowd had filed out, we had the annual USNOA "business meeting".

Cliff McGillivray, the current President of the USNOA, got up on the stage and told us all what a great Rally this was and how great it would be to have the 1980 Rally out in California. He then announced to everyone that I had actually volunteered to head up next year's Rally committee (did I really do that?). After a brief discussion about whether or not to have the Rally "way out in California", a show of hands vote indicated that almost everyone present was in favor of the idea. Several people made good suggestions about when and where to have it, a few people volunteered to help, and then Cliff turned the stage over to Bill Grigg, who was in charge of this year's Rally. Bill quickly got into the awarding of trophies, and other

prizes (magazine subscriptions, various gift certificates, hats and badges, etc.) for all the different categories of awards. He gave out trophies for Best Stock Norton, Best Custom Norton, Oldest Norton, Best Touring Norton (mine apparently placed a close second), and Best Café Norton. Then there were some trophies for the winners of the afternoon field events. Of special interest was the award for the can toss, which went to Frank Del Monte, the founder of special awards and door prizes were distributed, and even our own Jeff Pierce would have gotten a couple of T-shirts from Pete's Thing (the Norton shop in Grand Junction, Colorado owned by Branch member Peter Bredemeier) if only he'd been there when Bill called his name. Too bad Jeff!

It was about eleven o'clock by the time all the awards had been given out, and we were all very ready to head back up the road to Woodland Park and our campsite. As far as I know, everyone got back in one piece, but the nice dry night encouraged many to postpone sleep for a while. In fact, it sounded like the partying lasted well into the wee hours. I for one was very tired that night, and slept through most of it.

Sunday morning dawned bright and sunny, and a small group of us got together at a restaurant in town to discuss the 1980 Rally over a good breakfast. Many helpful ideas were suggested, which I shall try my best to incorporate into the plans I'll be working on this winter and spring. A special thanks to the Griggs, the Slarks and the Koguts for all help so far; I look forward to working with you all in 1980.



A TYPICAL ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCENE PROVIDES A NICE BACKDROP FOR MY 1974 850 INTERSTATE "MYNORT".



These advertisements are all here together on one page for several very important reasons. Firstly, it makes it very convenient for anyone who needs to get a particular part or a service of some sort to find a place to get it quickly. With all these dealers' addresses and phone numbers at your finger tips, you should be able to get in touch with someone who has what you need with minimal hassle.

Secondly, it provides a convenient list of dealers and what they have to offer that you can stuff in your pocket or tack up next to the phone or whatever. It is not intended as a means of enabling readers to avoid seeing the ads, since one can easily avoid reading them even when they're mixed in with all the text of the newsletter. Last, but possibly most important, it makes my job easier!

## Brooks Cyclery

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BROOKS CYCLERY HAS BEEN A NORTON DEALER EVER SINCE 1948 AND IS STILL SERVING THE BAY AREA WITH A COMPLETE STOCK OF NEW NORTON PARTS, TOOLS AND ACCESSORIES FOR YOUR NORTON.

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- \* BILL MANKINS - SERVICE - 12 YEARS

IN ADDITION TO ALL THE OTHER GOODIES IN STOCK, BROOKS IS NOW OFFERING LOCALLY MADE MUFFLERS, HEADER PIPES AND 2 INTO 1 CONVERSIONS FOR ALL COMMANDO MODELS. THESE MUFFLERS ARE ACTUALLY BETTER THAN THE STOCK 750 TYPE AND LOOK VERY SIMILAR. CURRENT PRICE IS 20% BELOW STOCK.

MR. BROOKS HAS RECENTLY JOINED THE NORTON OWNERS CLUB, AND WELCOMES ALL MEMBERS AT HIS SHOP FOR A CUP OF COFFEE AND SOME GOOD NORTON TALK. STOP BY AND GIVE HIM SOME OF YOUR BUSINESS, OR JUST STOP BY TO TALK AND CHECK OUT THE BEAUTIFUL OLD MOTORCYCLES HE HAS ON THE SHOWROOM FLOOR. IT'S WORTH IT.



## NEW HOSS CYCLE PARTS AND SERVICE

Steve Murray, co-owner of New Hoss Cycle, is an associate member of the Northern California Branch. If you're looking for "the long deal" on TIRES, TUBES, BATTERY, etc. for your Norton or Japanese bike he is the man to call. He really wants your business, and will give you a good deal.

Unfortunately, New Hoss does not service English bikes. (Yet?) However Steve hopes all you Norton fans with a Japanese bike will stop by and chat sometime. If he can do anything for you let him know.

## NEW HOSS CYCLE PARTS AND SERVICE

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STEVE MURRAY

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**Norton** PARTS AND SERVICE

GARY BROEDER: EXPERT MECHANIC  
N.O.C. MEMBER

Although not emphasizing British bikes on the salesroom floor, PALO ALTO YAMAHA has one of the bay area's best British motorcycle mechanics back in the shop. Gary Broeder knows as much as anyone in the area when it comes to making NORTONS run right. With his racing experience, Gary can work wonders on your machine when it needs help. I highly recommend PALO ALTO YAMAHA the next time you need a good mechanic for the old NORTON.



## cycle sports

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## 'Brian Slark and the Amazing Motor'; 'An Eventful Ride Home'

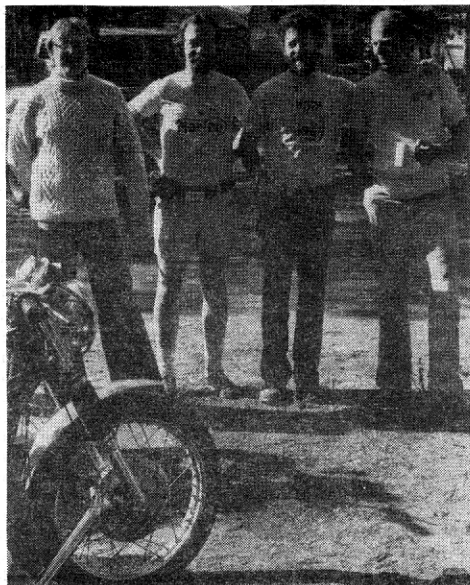
When we got back to the Diamond Campground the masses seemed to be up and about, and many were preparing to leave. But there was one exciting event left on the agenda: Brian Slark's unique "tech. session". Why unique? Well, for starters Brian knows a hell of a lot more about Nortons and how to take care of them than most of us in our dreams will ever hope to know. But what was most interesting about the session, to my way of thinking, was the cut-away Commando motor Brian was using to demonstrate his "lecture". What he was doing, actually, was more of a question and answer session, and the motor that had been provided (by a Norton dealer in Arizona, I think) came in very handy. All of the essential working parts were clearly visible, enabling those of us who find the innards of a motor mysterious to really understand what he was talking about. The crowd that gathered around Brian was quite large, and questions came in rapid fire from all sides, keeping Brian and the unique motor very busy. It was fascinating! Hopefully we'll be able to get the motor up to the Rally in the Redwoods in 1980, and I'm sure Brian'll gladly do his thing again. You'll enjoy it!

When the tech. session was over, so was the Rally, and everybody was saying what a good time they'd had there, and how much they were looking forward to the next Rally. Some time in there a tall, lanky guy on a funky-looking Commando HiRider with a huge backpack bolted on the back and Louisiana license plate appeared on the scene. I first spoke with him when he asked whether I knew anyone riding west to California. As Art Sirota and I were already planning to go together as far as San Francisco, we invited him to join us. As it turned out, this guy was riding from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, alone all the way to Berkeley and had come upon the Rally in Woodland Park by chance. He was Jack Engelage, who has since become a member of the Club, and he and Art and I spent the next four days together on the road between Woodland Park and the bay area. And it was some trip!

As we were leaving town, it started raining. We knew we were going to have a great ride. Sitting in a little doughnut shop in Woodland Park, and watching the rain come down like it would never stop, we wondered what we'd done to deserve such a fate. After an hour or two, it let up some, so we headed out to the west. Soon the rain was on our tails again, and this time there was no good place to hide. We just rode on into the wind and rain, and after an hour of misery it stopped! As we kept moving, the bikes dried out, and we soon dried out, but poor Jack looked like he'd just been to the North Pole in the middle of January wearing only his BVDs! He was frozen to the bone!

I loaned Jack a pair of gloves, and after he'd shivered a bit to get his circulation going again, we headed up into the next range of mountains. Not long before the sun set that Sunday evening, we crossed over the continental divide by the Independence Pass. It was spectacular! I highly recommend that road to anyone riding through the Colorado Rockies. If you do go, there's a nice little lady in Aspen.... Actually, we did spend the night in Aspen, and although we did meet some nice local ladies, and did our best to get some free accommodations at their respective abodes, we all struck out and ended up sleeping on the floor in the lobby of one of the motels in town. Since the events that transpired leading up to that forgettable finale were so totally unbelievable, I won't even mention them. In any event, we didn't get arrested, and we all got some sleep, and after a breakfast the next morning with Art's new friend of the previous night, we headed down the road to Glenwood Springs. Unable to find a neat little hot spring by the roadside that I'd

remembered from one of my previous trips through Colorado, we said goodbye to our fair friend and were off to Grand Junction and Pete's Thing. No sign of Pete Bredemeier though, so we kept on going. About ten miles down the road, just outside of the famous town of Fruita, my motor died! After we'd played around a bit we realized that I must have bent a valve and wasn't going anywhere. We got a room in a motel, went back to Grand Junction and left a message there for Pete, and proceeded to make the most of a sad situation. Next morning Pete called, came out and got the bike with a trailer, and we spent the rest of the day doing the needful to MYNORT.



1980 RALLY COMMITTEE: BECKETT, ME, SIROTA, SLARK

As it turned out, a tiny set-screw holding the velocity stack on the left carb worked its way loose and got sucked through all the way into the cylinder, where it bent the exhaust valve and finally ended up embedded in the piston! Well....to make a long story as short as possible, Pete helped me do everything, charged me almost nothing for a day's work, and we all had a great time. I can't believe how lucky I was it had happened in Fruita rather than out in the middle of the desert. If you ever have to break down, may it happen to you near Pete's Thing. Leaving Wednesday, we rode hard across Utah, spent the night in Ely, Nevada, and then rode all day Thursday across Nevada and California. 1000 miles in a day and a half! That last stretch was quite an ending to a great trip.

Slark

## History of Norton: "In Ascendant"

This month's History of Norton column comes from the fifth chapter, "In Ascendant", of Dennis Howard's book, **NORTON**, Thanks again to Mr. Howard and his publishers, Ballantine Books, for letting us use this material.

Dennis May, one-time editorial staffman extraordinary of Motor Cycling, was held in the highest regard by all who found excitement in speed on two wheels. His very style transported a reader to a world of tyres, chains, heavy metal and burnt Castrol 'R'; the very ingredients of motorcycle racing. In a series of profiles published some years ago May covered the racing careers of several stars of the Golden Era, of which Norton riders Tim Hunt and Stanley Woods were a certainty for inclusion. Came 1931 and Nortons were to embark on their fantastic run of successes, indeed perhaps their greatest years. No apologies are made for presenting Dennis May's words as he wrote them in his description of Stanley Woods' and Tim Hunt's ride in the German Grand Prix; the atmosphere of Nortons in Anger forty years ago (48 now).

'That awe-inspiring conglomeration of convolutions and switchbacks in the Eifel Mountains, the setting for the 1931 German G.P. The issue, it was obvious, would lie between Tim Hunt and Stanley Woods, and before the start it was decreed by Mr. Bill Mansell, then Norton's Boss, that the pair should preserve peace until the start of the last lap, then race to win. They duly conformed to this order of the day, virtually turning nine-tenths of the Prix into an extended rolling start. But finally, at the drop of the invisible hat, the fur really flew. Hunt, who says "I always liked corners" decided in advance where, "Deo Volente", he would drop it across the Dubliner, who expectedly went into a short lead at the start of the last lap. The Hunt plan was to get Woods on the outside of a very fast turn close to the finish. But the Nurburgring is over fourteen miles round, and several things happened before that hairy big climax. Topping one of the circuit's notorious blind brows Tim fluffed a gear change and went from third into second instead of into top, and in consequence nearly spilling him over the front number plate. Then at the celebrated Karussell Turn, which is the nearest approach to a Wall of Death that is to be found in this road-racing world, Woods made a super-human effort to rid his slipstream of Hunt, and in the process came within an inch of going over the first abrupt lip of the wall. When in due course the duellists roared down to the corner that Tim had earmarked for the showdown, Woods, a superior mindreader, delayed his braking to the last split-second, obviously intent on taking the turn at a speed that would make passing impossible. But Hunt, knowing it was now or never, veered out to a line that even for him was crazily wide, and deferred his cut-off later still. Both his wheels overran the road verge, throwing up a miniature wave of loose sand. Hunt's Norton slid broadside for fifty yards, but when he finally got the thing on an even keel, he was leading the race by half a length. One more hazard to go, this was a flat out S bend. Into it the pair plunged, Stanley's front wheel almost nuzzling Tim's rear. When they came out and headed for the

home stretch of concrete the two Nortons were dead abreast. Inch by inch, in a last Homeric spurt, Woods gained. With both riders' chins practically denting their tank tops, they gunned over the line. The Irishman was first by half a wheel.

Such dramatic scenes were to be re-enacted time and time again by the victorious Norton Teamsters; indeed such was their more or less guaranteed success, that one may be forgiven for describing their brilliant efforts as being of monotonous regularity, so much so that coverage of the seven years until 1937 has provided some headache in an attempt to prevent the narrative becoming somewhat tedious. For fear of the inevitable repetition, the years in question are presented in tabulated form, seasoned from time to time with interesting items appropriate to a particular year.

1931: Inlet ports reshaped on racing Nortons to accept down draught carburetors. 18mm plugs discarded in favour of 14mm. Fitting of semi-slipper type pistons, to prevent the possibility of both cracking and seizures. New engine shaft shock-absorber of the rubber buffer type. Four-speed gearboxes (Sturmey) operated by the positive foot-change mechanism, the old kick-change system having been discarded some three years earlier. Cast aluminium centre stands, the old rear stands being too heavy, but nevertheless used in practice periods, prior to a big race. New shock absorber, mounted on lower fork link assembly, operated by a large handwheel, with instant adjustment from the saddle.

Tim Hunt wins both classes of TT try out, the North West 200 in Ireland and is tipped to bring off the double in the Isle of Man. Some minutes after winning the Junior TT event, between gulps of stone ginger, firstly praised the excellent handling of his Norton and said the 'engine was lovely'. The bumpy bit before Kirkmichael he did not enjoy at all, but beyond the detachment of his plug terminal on the first lap he had no untoward incidents to report. Jimmie Guthrie, the second man home, was as quiet and reticent as usual, and mentioned that he did not have much time to fall off. Full of praise for his Norton he had jokingly remarked that his only complaint was that the engine 'could not do 200' because he felt that with the weather and the course as they were, he could have got around quite comfortably. He reported a slight headache as a result of 'lying down to it' but that was all.

It should have been a one-two-three victory for Nortons, for the other Jimmy (Simpson), a potential winner always, had the race in his pocket. It was cruel luck therefore that he was 'outed' temporarily by a trivial stop. Just before the Bungalow section his engine was loth to do more than a crawl. Thinking it might have been a plug, he fitted a new one, to no avail however, and he therefore decided to retire. He accepted a drink, no doubt from a sympathetic spectator, lit a cigarette, signed some autograph books, and then suddenly had a brainwave. He took out the main jet and found it almost sealed with dirt. He then cleared it, and all lost horses returned. A quicker diagnosis could not have saved him the race, but it might have given him 2nd place. Simpson eventually finished 3th, while Stanley Woods crossed the line in 4th place, beaten by that veritable little ball of dynamite Ernie Nott on his works Rudge.

## Norton in a Trade Mag?

Here's a goodie for you Norton fans! This "Editorial" appeared in the October, 1979 issue of a trade magazine called MOTORCYCLE DEALERNEWS, and was sent in by Branch member Marty Sullivan of Palo Alto. My thanks to Steve Matchett, Editor of MD for his superb Editorial, and also to Marty for sharing it with the rest of us. Hope you enjoy it too!

*Steve*

Editorially Speaking...

On a back country road, in a time before self-starters, I gave my heart to a motorcycle. It was big and it was British and the bike's owner had to steady it beneath me as I grabbed a handful of throttle and wondered which gear I was selecting. With the revs approaching valve-float I eased off the clutch; as the rear tire started smoking, my innocence stopped. I probably wouldn't recognize my first girlfriend again if I bumped into her in a phone booth, but I'd spot that big bike again through the mere smell of its passing.

The wet-palm memory of that first ride came back to me the other day as I watched a simple sight: A man on a motorcycle, moving down a sunlit road. The man was anybody, but the bike was a Norton; carefully restored and fully loved testimony to the Old School. Everything that wasn't chromed was painted black; the motorcycle bounced over every ripple in the pavement and the song of its valve train could be heard through two lanes of commuter traffic. The rider's arms were bare in his T-shirt and the wind pulled tears from his unguarded eyes as his helmet rested safely on the seat behind him. I followed and watched him, that man on his Norton, quietly analyzing the sight even as I let it blow the dust from long filed memories.

My rearview mirror flashed an image as another rider moved up to pass. He wore the latest in helmets with his business suit, and his multi-cylinder machine was likewise fully dressed, right down to the radio with 8-track. His bike didn't quiver as he silently moved by, nor did his head flicker in answer as the Norton rider acknowledged the passing with a wave of his hand.

I thought then and I think now that I could not have asked for a more meaningful insight into my new job as editor of MOTORCYCLE DEALERNEWS. The times are changing; the industry emphasis is changing from the iron-jawed Norton riders of yesterday to the well-scrubbed commuter riders of today; the proof is right out there in showroom inventories and customer profiles. Just as that Norton serves as a bench mark for the past, the self-starting radio-equipped commuter bike is the weather vane for the future. Change isn't around-the-corner-and-about-to-happen-someday; change is here; it's happening today.

*Steve M.*

Thanks Steve for the good words; it makes us Norton riders feel good deep down inside. I'd also like to thank MOTORCYCLE DEALERNEWS for letting me reprint the Editorial here in NN.

*Steve*

## Your Bike on a Poster?

At Milestone Motors Bookstore there is a man who is interested in old motorcycles for posters. He is hoping that we will have a get-together so that he can come and shoot some pictures. It's our chance to have posters made of real bikes.

If you're interested, please contact Maya Sunday through Wednesday, 5:00 to 8:30PM. We can set a date to meet for the pictures.

Nortons, Royal Enfields, Velocettes, BSAs, Vincents, Ariels, Scotts, etc. all welcome.

I really think it's about time there were posters of European motorcycles; I'm tired of seeing only Japanese bikes.

MAYA PETERSON  
6 WATER STREET  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
(415) 885-6769

## Good Idea!

This month's GOOD IDEA Award goes to Art Sirota of Burbank, who submitted the following in a recent letter:

Don't use your original Norton keys that came with the bike. Have duplicates made and store the originals in a safe place. First, the bike is going to be worth more money some day if it comes with the original keys. Second, should you lose your keys, getting duplicates made up will be easy. Third, a locksmith will be able to make better keys for you if you give him originals, not duplicates.

That is a good idea Art, and definitely deserving of the GOOD IDEA Award. Quite a few of us, I'm sure, have never given much thought to your first point, but I know you're right. I'll bet the bay area locksmiths will be extra busy during the next few weeks making duplicates of all the Norton keys in these parts!

I'd like to add my own suggestion, for what it's worth. When you store your keys "in a safe place", don't do what I've been known to do and hide them somewhere not even you can find them!

*Steve*

## Pins and T-Shirts

I still have some Northern California Branch lapel pins and T-shirts left. The shirts are mostly small and medium, unfortunately, but if that's what you want, please let me know. I'll plan to bring them with me to our next few meetings, so you can pick yours up at that time. If you cannot come to a meeting, send me the money and I'll mail yours to you. Please include \$1 for postage on the T-shirts. Thanks.

*Steve*

T-SHIRTS (white with the Branch badge in red, white and blue on the front, and the Norton logo in blue on the back)

\$5.00

LAPEL PINS (the Branch logo, as on the T-shirts - looks

\$1.50

great on your leathers)

## Technical Tips: Carl Mazel's "History of the Gearbox"

This Technical Tips column would like to talk about the gearbox. The fundamental idea is to multiply the torque of the engine so as to be able to utilize the various characteristics of the engines involved. High torque, low gears for climbing hills. Low torque multiplication for higher speeds. The ultimate being the final drive of chains or gears. The sprockets are easily changed to vary the ratios in the final drive, these to suit the rider's particular habits or riding style. Now, we are all able to start the machine and ride off without any trouble, but few riders understand how or why.

Many years ago the motorcycles had belt drives and the way to get under way was to slip the belt. The slippage of belts led to better ways of transmission, such as gears and even chains within gearboxes. These were sprockets with fixed centers such as gears, but had the same difficulty of the final drive because as the chains stretched they slapped the inside of the case and made all sorts of strange noises. In addition, they did a lot of damage to the bike when the chains broke. The shifting dogs in some gearboxes have a negative angle on the dog itself so it won't come out of gear when the power is on, but the bad point is that the misadjusted clutch will load these dogs so they will not release. Then the frustration of being stuck in gear when riding along is maddening.

As a general rule, in gearboxes of road-going machines the pairs of gears will have the same total number of teeth. And thus, if a change in ratios is contemplated, gears of the same pitch (same size and pressure angle of teeth), the total number of teeth being the same, they will fit. It is a little more complicated than that, but that is as easy as I can make it and still get away with it. The shifting mechanism, which has its own brand of futility, is pretty straightforward. However, clearances and wear can cause poor gear selection and the result is that the gearbox will not stay in gear, engine revs go skyhigh with the possibility of tipping a valve and hurting the engine. As the gearbox grows older it shifts very well, and as it gets older still the bushings and bearings get sloppy and clearances dull the movement and gearing is also sloppy.

The postwar Nortons had gearboxes that shifted well and were very positive with ratios that allowed good low end speed coupled with flexibility and strength. The ratios allowed the engine to work at its best torque revs, and gave good mileage with longevity. These gearboxes also had very stout, course teeth which lasted and lasted. The major trouble was a clutch bearing that made declutching difficult, and it was impossible to change gears except by letting up on the throttle before shifting. The clutch adjustment was very easy even though it was abused no end. It was necessary to have a minimum of play in the cable, but otherwise it was no problem. The Perodo clutch inserts were as positive as a dog clutch.

The clutch very rarely slipped, unless the oilbath primary was overfilled. When this happened you had to take the clutch apart and once washed in clean petrol, it was soon back to its fierce holding action. The lever in the gearbox that attached to the cable had to be at right angles with the cable when the clutch was at its maximum release point. This is as easy an adjustment as you can find. There had to be a little end play in the rod that pushed on the pressure plate. If there wasn't the rod got hot and grew until it made the clutch slip. And Honda thought they had the first automatic! In contrast, the Velocette clutch adjustment was nothing short of being granted the engineering masterpiece of all time. The language that came forth from Velocette mechanics when adjusting a Velo clutch would make a pirate blush with envy. Another thing that most riders today are unaware of is the freeing of the clutch before starting. If you didn't it was damn near impossible to engage low gear without a real crashing of gears. Sometimes in a weak gearbox you could break a tooth off.

The beautiful machinery of today may have its own faults, but shifting and declutching is not one of them. The other thing I would mention is that in today's motorcycles the material has better quality control as well as better processing, and thus it is usually stronger. There were very few machines that used chains that ever saw 100,000 miles in days gone by, but if you look around now you will see more and more machines of every different manufacturer that are completing the magic number. Sometimes the manufacturer encounters problems and it takes a little while to sort them out, but sort out he does and the results are astounding. I think that given the ability to be at ease and not in a hurry, the gearboxes of today are just about bullet or explosion-proof. Shifting without a clutch is OK in the heat of a race, but doing it on the road if it is not necessary is stupid.

There is one other point I would like to make about gearboxes and that is to use the correct oil in the weight as well as the constituency (consistency?) and quantity. There are some lubricants that are sulfur-chlorinated compounds, which are corrosive to some of the metals. They do not wear away overnight, but they will take their toll in ways that are not normally thought of by a motorcycle rider. The gradual wear and resultant deterioration are slow, but they do take place, with the inevitable stoppage resulting in delays and expense. I am well aware that to some these experiences may be quite foreign. However, to those who understand from experience, it was something to behold. I myself have stopped unexpectedly on numerous occasions, and if the experience was embarrassing at the time, it at least left a lasting impression that reliability is the key to success. If you don't get to the end you can't participate in the finish. To those who are interested in some background in gears I would be glad to furnish reference material that can be had at some expense, or will answer questions as they arise.

*Carl*

Thanks again Carl for your continued interest and support. These Technical Tips articles are really appreciated! If anyone would like to direct any specific questions to Carl, I'm sure he would be willing to answer them and offer helpful hints.

CARL MAZEL  
10606 JORDON AVE.  
CHATSWORTH, CA 91311

*Steve*

## Nortons in IRON HORSE and RIDER, Believe It or Not!

The December issues of two motorcycling magazines have articles that might be of particular interest to Norton owners. It is noteworthy, I feel, that these publications are at opposite ends of the spectrum in the motorcycle press, and neither one is particularly interested in English bikes. Nevertheless, they both seemed to be interested enough in our favorite bike to run full feature "articles" involving Nortons. Kinda makes you feel proud!

The first I ran across was a short story in IRON HORSE, an Easy Riders publication that addresses itself to older machines. In among all the chopper and skin photos is a real goodie by Paul Garson (a member of our Branch) entitled "Snortin Norton". Since it's quite long, and has to be read in its entirety to be fully appreciated, I won't try to excerpt any of it here. It is very good though, and I encourage you to try to find a copy of the December issue of IRON HORSE and check it out. Also in that issue is a center page "pin-up", so to speak, of a Norton apparently going up a 45° incline in some sort of a hill-climb event. It's really nice and worth the cost of the magazine all by itself.

The other article is in the December issue of RIDER, which supposedly directs itself towards the "Motorcycle Touring, Commuting and Camping" set. Believe it or not though, their latest has a reasonably long article entitled "WAR ON TWO WHEELS" and written by Rider's Safety Editor, Stuart Munro. Since I'm a loyal subscriber to their mag, and since this couldn't possibly hurt its sales, I'm hoping that the guys at Rider will let me print some excerpts from the article. I'd like to thank them in advance on behalf of all of us. THANKS GUYS! We appreciate it.

Here's a little goodie from Dan O'Neill's work, The Collective Unconscience of Odd Bodkins. My thanks to Dan and also to Glide Publications for letting me use it.

"WAR ON TWO WHEELS" - Stuart Munro

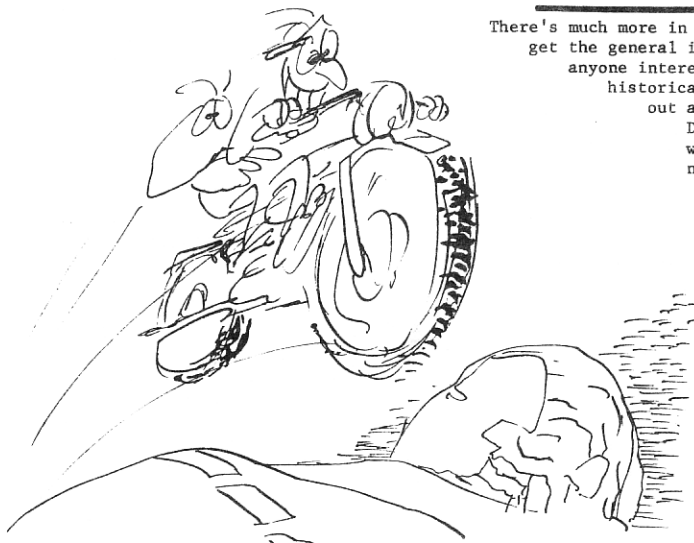
1939 was a bad year. It saw the outbreak of the second world war to end all wars. On a smaller scale, disaster also struck the British motorcycle industry. In the Isle of Man TT, where Nortons ruled supreme, the great German rider, Meier, easily beat the Norton team on a BMW 500. And in the Ulster TT, Freddie Frith was leading the pack when Serafini on a Gilera rode beside him, grinned, and accelerated past him. Ominous portents. On September 3, 1939, England and France declared war on Germany. (And I'll bet you thought it was because Germany was invading the eastern European nations! - Sorry 'bout that Gene). Later Italy and Germany formed the axis on which the world was intended to rotate.

The British motorcycle industry continued to manufacture motorcycles, but they were painted two shades of blue (for the Air Force and the Navy) and khaki (for the Army). In 1940 every officer up to the rank of Brigadier General had to complete a course in motorcycle operation. The courses were taught at special schools and instructors were experienced army riders. Tests took the form of grueling one-day English trials. In 1941, undersized, lightweight motorcycles were developed for airborne and Commando units. (You were perhaps wondering why Norton called their Isolastic model the Commando?). About 40,000 motorcycles were manufactured for use by the British armed forces. There were Norton 16H models, a crude, functional side-valve painted in matte olive drab. Even the exhaust system was matte-finished, and the bike had two pannier carriers and a side prop stand with a pivoted foot that would have supported an ocean liner in dry dock. Norton also made their Big Four, another side-valve, often equipped with a flatbed sidecar for rapid transport of two or three infantrymen. Some had Lewis, Vickers and Bren guns behind an armored shield. The side-valves were unbeatable for manufacturing and servicing simplicity, but dispatch riders preferred the overhead valve models. The flatheads would only do about 62 mph, downhill, with a strong following wind.

There's much more in the article, but you get the general idea I'm sure. I hope anyone interested in this sort of historical perspective will go out and get a copy of the December issue of RIDER while they're on the newstands. It's good!

Steve

ODD BODKINS  
(Reprinted with  
the permission  
of Dan O'Neill)



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Steve: I've been working on my "Reverse Gear" idea for the Norton, and I believe I've made some real progress. My first idea, as you'll recall, was to attach the exhaust pipes to the inlet ports and hang the carbs from the exhaust ports. After extensive calculations and testing on paper, I decided that the idea was a sound one, but that the operation was not practical because of the time involved to make the switch from the old system to the new one. That is, by the time you've completed the operation and got your bike in reverse, the sun will have gone down and you'd want to put the bike away anyway. Switching back into forward would also take a long time. My latest idea is so simple, I don't know why somebody else hasn't thought of it! Simply turn the gearbox around!! I realize this also takes quite a bit of time, but not as much as my first idea. The gearbox could be hinged to somehow swivel and flip into forward or reverse position. Now I wonder if anyone else has worked on this problem and run into these same obstacles?

ART SIROTA  
BURBANK, CA

Dear Art: I doubt that anyone else has worked on the "reverse gear" idea, but I'm sure that you'll go far if you stick with it. Keep up the good work man and if you do run into any more "obstacles" along the way, just use reverse! Hang in there, and KEEP ON NORT'N! *Steve*

Dear Steve: Thanks for the application form and good wishes. The Rally was excellent, and I am already looking forward to seeing you and your friends and everyone else next summer. I had a fine trip home through Wyoming and Montana, and I have put in about 2000 miles of riding since then. We are just getting to the end of a beautiful fall, and we might just have a couple of weeks still. Just after I got home I traded my Roadster (very sad moment) for a John Player Special (very nice moment) with 5000 miles! It is showing 7000 now, and I know now that it was a good deal. Needs a few touches on the fibreglas, and aluminium rims, gas shocks and also a Boyer. To me it is the absolute ultimate Norton and might not be ridden heavily in the future, but I am hoping to find a good Interstate by Spring for next summer's traveling.

Question: When running my bike with lights on (two), my battery drains (new battery). I have not looked for faults in the system yet, but with two of the new style Lucas bulbs (with the little reflectors) maybe it is to be expected. Any advice would be appreciated. I suspect it could be a common problem with JPNs.

I am a little late responding to your mail, but I hope I will catch you in time to get your next newsletter covering the Rally. It's nice to see a newsletter with familiar faces.

Good luck to you and your Club members, and give my regards to those I met in Colorado. Keep Snortin' (not Coke dummy)

HOVARD HEIMDAL  
3702 20TH AVENUE  
REGINA, SASKACHEWAN  
CANADA S4S 0P1

Dear Hovard: Sounds like you got a great deal! Don't know about that headlight problem, but I included your address above in case other JPN owners want to write to you. See you in August.

*Steve*

"Far Away From Home And Broke Down Pushing  
My Norton On Down The Road Blues"

by Art Sirota

Well sometimes it's the pushrods  
and sometimes it's the crank;  
Whatever it is it always means  
less money in my bank.

I know that this machine's a twin,  
and they say trouble always comes in twos;  
I've got those far away from home and broke  
down pushing my Norton on down the road blues.

I was riding through the desert,  
my hair was turning gray;  
The nearest Norton dealership  
was seven states away!  
At the bottom of a mountain  
the engine died and left me with no clues;  
I've got those far away from home and broke  
down pushing my Norton on down the road blues.

I pushed it in the daytime,  
I pushed it through the night;  
I pushed 'til all my fingers and toes  
were turning deadly white.  
I get roughly seven thousand miles-  
not on my tires- but on my shoes!  
I've got those far away from home and broke  
down pushing my Norton on down the road blues.

Great song Art! I hope you'll come up to San Francisco for the Christmas party and sing it for us. Or how 'bout a record? *Steve*

Dear Steve: I sure enjoyed reading your account of the USNOA Rally in Colorado, and I think that a future rally in California is a superb idea. I can't see how any Northern California members can miss it.

My Commando is not presently in good fettle as the camshaft has gone flat. That is nothing to cry about as the bike has travelled over 20,000 very hard miles and has seen 100 mph in third gear more than once, and has seen the Rocky Mountains twice. Too bad the third time wasn't the Rally!

I intend (finances permitting) to split the cases in December, and install a mild racing cam with radiussed followers, a new primary chain, inner clutch wheel, and do a conscientious valve job with new springs and guides, and renew the swing arm bushings. I do not anticipate any problems with the pistons and bores or the crank and mains. If I feel energetic, a new gearbox layshaft bearing may be in order. If pump gasoline wasn't so bad these days, I would definitely raise the compression over 9:1, but better to leave it alone.

I hope that things are going well for you and the rest of the membership; I'm still waiting for a visit from any of you who wish to drive down the nicest part of Highway 1.

CHRIS COUPER  
20 BROAD STREET  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

P.S. Maybe I should leave my Commando alone and trade it in on a new Wankel?

Dear Chris: I recently learned that a Norton in need of an engine overhaul isn't worth a whole lot, so I wouldn't trade it in for a Wankel Norton or anything else! Good luck with your winter project, and I'll look forward to seeing you up this way next year. If you can't make it to a Club meeting or ride, definitely come to the Norton Rally in August.

*Steve*



## Carolyn Scott: Memb.Sec./Treas.

Here's some good news for those who get tired of my rambling on all the time on the same old stuff about retiring and needing a new Secretary, etc. I am very pleased to announce that Carolyn Scott has volunteered to take over the duties I've had for the past two years as Secretary. In essence, Carolyn will serve as Membership Secretary and Treasurer, a logical combination of responsibilities, which I'm sure she'll handle admirably. I have received no indication that anyone else was interested in being Secretary, and have therefore decided to go ahead and pass on the membership and treasury info. to Carolyn. I fully expect that in all its wisdom the Branch membership will give her its full endorsement at our next meeting, and also hope that all members will take a moment from time to time to thank Carolyn for her contributions to the Club. I know from personal experience that the job can take a lot of time that would be otherwise spent out on the Norton (or at least tending to its needs!), and an occasional word of thanks or encouragement can be much appreciated. Please do send her a card sometime to let her know she's not working in a total void. Also, be sure to keep her mailing list up to date. If you're going to have a new address, send her your old and new addresses as soon as possible. It's also a good idea to make sure she has your home and work phone numbers, and an updated listing of the Norton(s) you own. Now then, don't you have some good reasons to drop her a line?? Here's Carolyn's new address:

CAROLYN SCOTT  
1970 LATHAM #14  
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA  
94040  
(415)968-5117

Here's wishing Carolyn all the best in her new role, and a special thanks for volunteering.

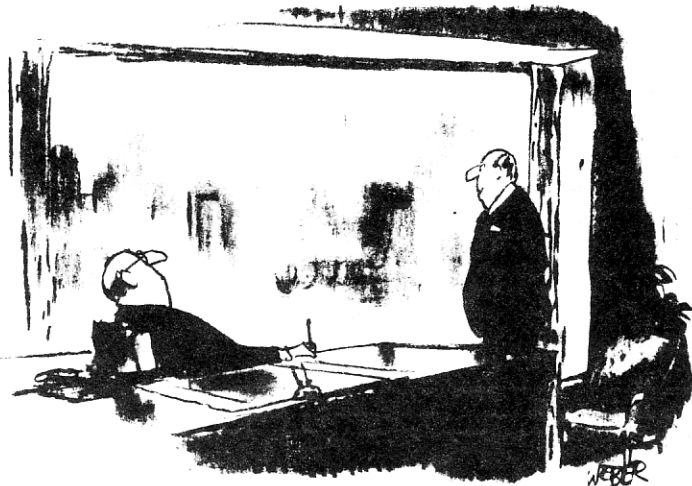
## Who, me for President?

In the same vein, I'm also pleased to announce that I've decided to serve as President during the next year, assuming that nobody else is interested. So far, there has been no expression of interest whatsoever, but you never know. Should anyone be nominated, we will hold a real election at our December meeting, and a vote may be sent in by mail by any member who is unable to attend.

If I do end up being President of this Club, I plan to continue my current push towards greater interaction with other NOC Branches and other Norton groups. As many of you know, I would like to see us get together with the USNOA one of these days, and although I have no desire to debate the wisdom of such an effort, as a couple of members would probably wish, I will nevertheless continue to bring us together in my own way. I also plan to continue as the liaison between our local Branch and the Executive Committee of the NOC. I have found this to be an increasingly important task during the past two years, and would like to keep on doing it in the future. Assuming that Carolyn will have more than enough to keep herself busy, I'll not burden her with this additional responsibility.

There is also a need for someone to do the planning of our monthly meetings and rides, as well as occasional special Club events such as the Beer Bust Rally, the ride to the CAMA Rally, race meets, etc. I hope that somewhere out there is a member who'd be willing to serve as an Events person. Please speak up soon! *Steve*

This winner was in the New Yorker magazine quite some time ago, and hopefully they won't mind my reprinting it here in the NN. It seemed so appropriate at this time that I couldn't resist!



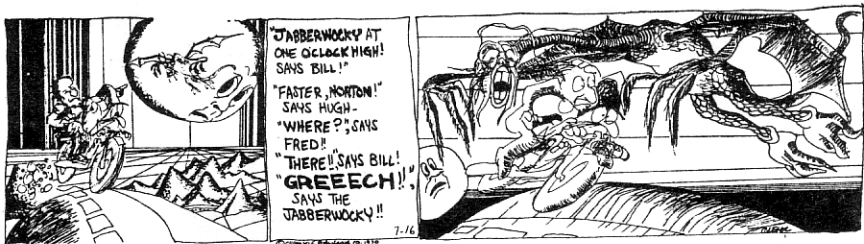
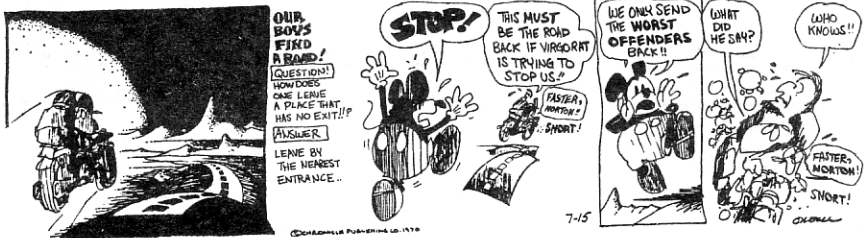
*"The child in me is still alive, Walt, and when I finally step down as Secretary, by God, I'm going to let the little fellow out!"*

# ODD BODKINS

(REPRINTED WITH THE PERMISSION OF DAN O'NEILL)

Firstly, the usual thanks to Dan O'Neill and Glide Publications for letting us use these strips. Much appreciated guys!

Secondly, my apologies for such a meager intro. this time, but since I have five strips to run I have to be brief. Hope you enjoy it anyway.



NEXT MONTH: Who knows? I'll try to dig up something good, but you'll have to wait.....