

Norton Notice

Volume 2 Issue 2

February 1979



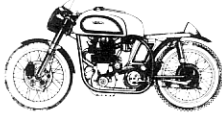
"The Nortons, father and son, in the Isle of Man in 1912
James is seated on his favourite model, the Type Big 4"
(Thanks to Dennis Howard and Ballantine for the above)

In This Issue:

- Membership and Advertising Info. - p.2
- February Branch Meeting and Ride - p.3
- "Trading Post" Classified Ads - p.4
- 1979 AFM Racing Schedule - p.5
- 1978 Sears Point 250 Miler - p.5
- Vintage Motorcycle Auction - p.5
- "Technical Tips": Swing Arm - p.6
- "History of Norton" - p.7
- "Odd Bodkins": Fat Cats! - p.8

The NORTON NOTICE is published by
the Northern California Branch





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:

| | <u>1 issue</u> | <u>3 issues</u> | <u>6 issues</u> |
|----------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 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.

I really do appreciate all the input I've gotten so far, and hope you'll keep it up.

STEVE

Membership Info

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:

| | <u>PAY:</u> | <u>RECEIVE:</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------------------------------------|
| FULL MEMBERS: | \$20 | <u>NORTON NOTICE</u> & <u>ROADHOLDER</u> |
| ASSOC. MEMBERS: | \$5 | <u>NORTON NOTICE</u> |
| SOCIAL MEMBERS: | \$5 | <u>NORTON NOTICE</u> |

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.

February Branch Meeting

The venue for this month's meeting will be popular Edinburgh Castle in San Francisco. For those who may not have been there yet, it is a rather large Scottish pub with an excellent selection of British brews, fish 'n chips served the right way (wrapped in newspaper with a bottle of vinegar on the side), and even an occasional bagpiper in action. What more could you ask for? As a rule we more or less take over the meeting room located upstairs over the bar, and I don't think we've ever filled the place. So if you're a new member and haven't yet been to an NOC meeting, or if you've been in the club for a while but have been out of sight lately, why not try to make it to this one? It'll be worth the effort.

Planned agenda:

- Branch beer bust plans (May is coming)
- Vote on ordering badges, pins, etc.
- (I have some samples to display)
- Discussion of CAMA Visalia meeting

I'm sure there will be more to add to this list before the 8th. If you have any issues to raise, please come to the meeting.

DATE: THURSDAY, FEB. 8th
 TIME: 7:30PM
 PLACE: EDINBURGH CASTLE
 950 GEARY AVENUE
 SAN FRANCISCO
 (415) 885-4074

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

TT MOTORS
 2800 ADELINE
 BERKELEY, CA
 (415)845-8235

At TT Motors the man to see for all Norton parts, service and advice is TT's resident Norton man, Bob Gaulin.

Bob will be able to get you what you need for your Norton, and will even give you a 10% discount on parts if you're a card-carrying member of the Northern California Branch of the NOC.

I was very impressed with a beautiful early Commando fastback which TT has been working on recently. I know it was for sale when I visited TT Motors last month, but if it's still there it would be worth the trip just to get a close look at it. Outstanding!

Go on over to Berkeley when you get a chance and give Bob Gaulin and the rest of the guys at TT Motors some Norton business. They're a good bunch and definitely willing to help you.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

LARRY RANDALL

English Specialist

West Bay Cycle Dismantlers, Inc.

ENGINE REBUILDING & MACHINING FACILITIES
 USED PARTS & ACCESSORIES
 USED MOTORCYCLES

750 San Antonio Road
 Palo Alto, California 94303

(415) 494-8033

When you need parts for your Norton or other motorcycle, particularly if used parts will do the job, Larry Randall is a good person to know. At West Bay Cycle Dismantlers, Larry has a large stock of all kinds of parts for all kinds of bikes, and will probably have exactly what you're looking for. If not, he'll know where to get it for you in a hurry.

Give Larry a call if you think he might be able to help you out, or just stop in at his place in Palo Alto (just off 101). He knows a lot about Nortons, and will be happy to answer any questions you might have about yours. A good man to know.

February Ride

Since the December Northern California Branch ride was rained out on the date scheduled, and since the turnout was quite small the following Sunday, this month's ride will meet at the same venue. Alice's Restaurant, for anyone who may not know about it, is one of the most popular motorcyclists' gathering spots in the bay area. Almost every Sunday morning the parking area in front of Alice's and also the one across the road fill up with motorcycles of all marques. It's usually more interesting to get there in the early hours (around 9:00 or so), because the small kitchen in Alice's gets pretty busy. That's also when most of the British and other 'real motorcycles' seem to show up.

We'll plan to meet in front of Alice's at the usual time, 10:00AM, and anyone showing up a little earlier is most welcome to join me for one of their good Skylonda breakfasts. At 10:30 or so we'll head north on Skyline (Hwy.35) to the San Mateo - Half Moon Bay Road (Hwy.92). As mentioned later in this issue, there will be a big vintage motorcycle auction at the San Mateo Exposition Center that day, starting at 11:00AM. Most of the members I've talked with about it said they'd like to go, so I think we might incorporate it into our club ride. For those of you who'd rather ride, there are lots of great roads in the peninsula hills, and you can just split off from the rest of the group.

DATE: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11th
 TIME: 10:00AM
 PLACE: ALICE'S RESTAURANT
 SKYLONDA CORNERS
 HWY.84-HWY.35 INTERSECTION
 WOODSIDE

TRADING POST

FOR SALE

1974 Commando 850 John Player Special in mint condition - 100% stock. From the fine motorcycle collection of Carl Castle, which means this bike has been pampered: \$3000 "DUTCH" BERGMAN: (408) 247-1313
Cycle Sports - 2355 El Camino, Santa Clara

1975 Commando 850 MkIII - excellent: \$1500
MOE MATHER: (415) 322-7747

1975 Commando 850 MkIII engine - parting out. Also 1973 frame, front end and all electrics. Prices very reasonable and even negotiable. Will also trade parts.
GERRY REYNOLDS: (408) 625-2085

1975 Commando 850 MkIII engine - has just been rebuilt: asking \$500. Assorted parts.
BILL SANDFORD: (408) 739-7714

WANTED

1972 or 1973 Commando 750 with front disc brake - must be in good, stock condition.
DAVE CARUSO: (707) 255-6004
3696 Montana Drive, Napa 94558

Craven rack(chrome or black) for Commando.
GENE AUSTIN: (415) 573-9559

Well that's all there is this month. Please remember to let me know if I should run your ad again after it's run for two months, and also if you want it discontinued after only one. All TRADING POST stuff must get to me by the 20th of the month in order to make it into the next issue. OK?

STEVE

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

SELBY MOTORS
346 El Camino
Redwood City
(415)369-4112

Selby Motors is conveniently located in the mid-peninsula and can take care of your Norton parts and service needs. "Give them the business."

Jack Morris, a member of the Northern California Branch, heads up the parts department at Selby Motors, and will do his best to make sure you get the parts and accessories you need.

Alan Hook, also a Branch member, is in charge of the service department. He's a capable Norton mechanic and will see to it that your machine gets the expert care it deserves.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

MOTORCYCLES UNLIMITED
5776 Paradise Drive
Corte Madera
(415) 924-0327

Alex McLean, a member of the Northern California Branch and a long-standing Norton dealer, has what you need for yours.

At his shop in Corte Madera, he has a large stock of Dunstall goodies for your Norton, as well as lots of stock parts.

Alex also has some beautiful old Nortons on display at Motorcycles Unlimited, so even if you don't need to buy anything, a trip to his shop will be worth your time.

Anyone living down in Arizona or planning trip through the southwest might want to make a note of the following. Thanks go to Branch member Lynn Simmons, who now lives Tucson, for sending me this information,

"D&F CYCLE in Tucson has a wide variety of used parts, and PETE'S CYCLE in Mesa has new parts at a good price (e.g. the tach. drive of an early '70 Commando for less than \$10 new). D&F is located on 36th Street in Tucson, and PETE'S is on Country Club Road in Mesa. PETE'S may not be in the Yellow Pages since it is such a small shop. It's devoted to only Nortons and AJSs."

CLUB SHIRTS

Anyone who hasn't yet gotten his beautiful Northern California Branch NOC T-shirts is hereby reminded that Steve has them and is planning to bring a good assortment of all types and sizes to the Branch meetings. If you cannot come to a meeting but would be able to pick yours up at a Branch ride, by all means call me and let me know what you want. I'll gladly bring along a few to each ride if I know in advance which to bring.

Here's what I've got:

Heavy weight T-shirts: S M L XL
"French cut" shirts: S M L
Tank tops: S M L XL

I'll order some more sweat shirts if there are those who want them, and I can get the logo silk-screened on any white shirt you want to have it on. Just bring it to me.

STEVE 747-0326
497-6601

Racing Info

1979 AFM RACING SCHEDULE

The following schedule appeared in the most recent issue of LAP TIMES, the 'official newsletter of the American Federation of Motorcyclists'. I am grateful to them for letting me reprint their schedule here, and hope that some of you who are at all interested in motorcycle racing will try to make it to some of the races this year and help support the AFM people. Now and then a Norton might be running in some of these races believe it or not! I will try to publicize such info whenever I have it, and would greatly appreciate any input you might be able to give. In other words, if you know of an upcoming race let me know about it the month before, particularly if there will be Norton running. Thanks.

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------------------|
| Feb. 18 | - | Ontario |
| Mar. 25 | - | Willow Springs |
| Apr. 8 | - | Sears Point |
| Apr. 28-29 | - | Ontario 6-Hour |
| May 6 | - | Sears Point |
| May 13 | - | Riverside |
| June 3 | - | Sears Point |
| June 17 | - | Ontario |
| June 24 | - | Sears Point(tent.) |
| July 8 | - | Sears Point(tent.) |
| July 29 | - | Riverside |
| Aug. 19 | - | Ontario |
| Aug. 26 | - | Sears Point |
| Sep. 16 | - | Sears Point |
| Sep. 23 | - | Riverside C.P. |
| Oct. 7 | - | Sears Point |
| Oct. 21 | - | Willow Springs |
| Nov. 11 | - | Riverside |
| Nov. 18 | - | Sears Point Endurance |

Auction

VINTAGE MOTORCYCLE AUCTION - FEB. 11th

On Sunday, February 11th, there will be an auction of antique, classic and special interest motorcycles at the San Mateo Exposition Center and Fairgrounds, 2495 Delaware in San Mateo. The event is sponsored by the Vintage Motorcycle Auction Co. of Long Beach. For further information phone (213)433-4704.

Since the auction falls on the same day as the February branch ride, we will meet that morning at Alice's Restaurant up on Skyline Drive, and all those interested in the auction can ride down as a group. The route up Skyline and the down Hwy 92 into San Mateo is a very enjoyable one in good weather, but a bit short for a real club ride. Those not interested in the auction might want to plan a ride down to Big Basin and out to the coast if the weather permits. In any event, the options are there. Let's hope that there will be quite a few of us interested in old bikes to form an NOC contingent at the auction. I'll bring some extra branch shirts for anyone who wants one.

NORTON in 3rd Place!

1978 SEARS POINT 250-MILE ENDURANCE RACE

Appearing in the same issue of LAP TIMES was an article about the 250-miler held at Sears Point on November 26th. I would like to share with anyone who didn't see the race or the article a few of the relevant highlights. I thank LAP TIMES for the use of their material. I will quote directly.

The Open class was the first wave and three AMA Superbike competitors quickly took the front positions. Billy Addington (Kawasaki - teammate: Kurt Kritikos) grabbed the lead, harrassed by Harry Klinzmann (BMW - teammate: Dave Emde) and Paul Ritter (Ducati - teammate: Vance Breese). Behind the leading trio the other classes were getting sorted out. Steve Epstein (Kawasaki) and the unheralded team of Doug Moore, M. Engles and John Porter on an 850 NORTON(!) were disputing fourth Open class position. Nick Theroux (500 Yamaha) had his thumper into the 750's and in the lead for the 550 class, while the Silver Jubilee Triumph of Dan Batcheller (brother of branch member Jerry Batcheller) and Dave Matthews was settling into the 750 class lead. In the popular 410 class John Williams (co-rider: Doug Draper) jettied his Superstreet Yamaha into a big lead in the early laps.

Here I shall paraphrase the article, and go on to see what happened to the NORTON crew. The Kawasaki ridden by Addington crashed while coming out of turn seven, and the San Jose BMW went onto one cylinder forcing Klinzmann to head for the pits, where the carb was found to be loose. Ritter grabbed the lead meanwhile on his Ducati, but 15 minutes later the chain broke, and the BMW was back in the lead again.

Second place was now held by the NORTON team, who had been running a steady race with times near 2:00 minutes per lap.

Quick runners included the 850 NORTON of riders Moore, Engles and Porter, and the Batcheller-Matthews Triumph. The NORTON team had started near the front and had stayed there.

Third overall and second in the Open class went to the relatively unknown trio on the 850 NORTON. The team's fast progress provoked cries of "Who are those guys, anyway?" from the race watchers as they had a steady trouble-free ride to a high finish.

And so NORTON proves itself again. Who said that NORTON motorcycles aren't dependable anyway? Also of interest was the second place finish in the 550 class of branch member Gary Broeder and John Buddenbaum on their BSA 500 thumper. That race was a thumper-lover's delight, as the top three were all big singles.

Technical Tips

Len Allen rejoins the **NORTON NOTICE** technical with this month's article on the maintenance of the swing arm. I want to thank Len for his continued help on the Technical Tips column, and I encourage those of you who might want to disagree with Len to write down your own comments and send them in to me for publication in next month's issue. Thanks.

STEVE

SWING ARM MAINTENANCE

There is an old saying: 'To get better apples, shake the tree'. My purpose in writing these articles is two-fold. One is to share my own experiences and thereby maybe save someone a little trouble and money. The other is to get some of you to share your experiences so that I can learn from you. I can't afford to make all the mistakes myself.

The swing arm is a very important part of any bike for proper handling. If the swing arm bearings are worn the bike is not very stable in a straight line and doesn't inspire a lot of confidence when entering a turn.

Proper maintenance of the swing arm on the Norton (Commando) is an easy task, but may be the most neglected. On the 750, the proper lube to use is 140 wt. gear oil, which is not too easy to find, but a very little will last a long time. It is impossible to get 140 wt. gear oil through the lube fitting, so I just unscrew it and put the oil through the hole vacated, and then re-install the fitting. I have found a nose spray bottle to be the best oil dispenser, and if you look carefully at the top, you will find a joint at the end plug which can be easily removed with a knife. The tube in the plug should then be pulled out and the hole in the end drilled out to about 1/8". Fill the bottle with 140 wt. gear oil and put the plug back in. You can now squirt in about 1/2 oz. of oil with no difficulty.

At about 30,000 miles my 750 (Commando) developed too much side play in the swing arm. The wear was not only in the bearings but in the swing arm shaft and the engine cradle as well. The cradle consists of the black steel plates that hold the engine, transmission and swing arm together. The shaft is held secure in the cradle with one 1/4" bolt at the rear. In my cradle the hole had been worn oblong, so I didn't feel that simply replacing the bearings would improve things much. Since I already had a lathe, I bought a reamer to ream the cradle hole and the bearings oversize, and made a new shaft to fit. When finished it was good as new.

To remove the swing arm and shaft, proceed as follows: Remove the rear wheel, brake drum, shocks and the bearing cover cap on the right side of the swing arm. Now you can see the bolt that holds the shaft in place. It faces the rear in the center of the cradle, just in front of where the tire had been, and it has a 7/16" head. Remove it and the shaft can be pulled.

With the bearing cover off, you will see a hole through the shaft. It is threaded 1/2-20 (American NF thread). You can get a bolt at most auto supply stores and some hardware stores, and it should be about 6" long. Screw the bolt into the hole 10 turns or so, and then pull on it while rocking the swing arm. It should come out without too much trouble. The swing arm is now free to come out. There are some bolts on the bike that can be used for this purpose, but the effort required to remove and replace them doesn't seem worth it. Better just to get one.

When you are ready to reinstall the swing arm, the 'O' ring seals should also be replaced. If coated with grease they will stay in place and go back in with less chance of damage. There are two sizes of 'O' rings and one size is hard to find, so my advice is to get the new ones before pulling it apart.

If you do decide to replace the bearings, they must be pressed out and the new ones (about \$11 a pair) pressed in. I made hardwood blocks to fit and used a large machinist's vice for a press.

The whole job is easy and shouldn't take more than one evening to finish. Don't forget to fill the swing arm with gear oil when you're finished.

NOTE: The 850 electric start has permanent lubed bearings.

LEN ALLEN

PAID ADVERTISEMENT



cycle sports

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S

Leading Norton Dealer

IN & ON NORTONS SINCE 1970

dunstall
POWER

SALES + PARTS + EXPERT SERVICE

NOW CLOSING OUT
DUNSTALL ODDS & ENDS
35% TO 50% off

2355 EL CAMINO REAL
AT SAN TOMAS EXPRESSWAY

SANTA CLARA, CALIFORNIA

(408) 247-1313

History of Norton – “The Early Years” (Part 3)

This installment concludes my slightly abridged version of the first chapter of Dennis Howard's book NORTON, which was published in 1972 by Ballantine Books, Inc. I wish to thank Mr. Howard and Ballantine for the use of their material, and I apologize for whatever editorial license I may have taken.

Following the 1907 TT victory, and a ninth place in the following year with S.C.Perryman up, no Norton completed the course again until 1914 when two models were placed 46th and 51st. The proving of a racing motorcycle is a long and tedious business and in all fairness Norton needed time to perfect his designs.

The scene was changing rapidly. No longer were classes divided into the single- and twin-cylinder categories. Now it was a matter of Junior and Senior capacities according to the capacity of a machine. The full course in the 'Island', not so very different from that in use today, was raced over, and in this, the last sweet summer before the Kaiser War, all the sporting young men stood beside their machines at Douglas topped with the new and compulsory safety helmet. Formerly, riders had worn the dashing leather flying cap, but following the death of Rudge rider Bateman when speeding over the Mountain section in 1913, the Auto Cycle Union as it was now called wisely insisted upon the necessary precaution. The war clouds were gathering but activity at Brooklands continued in a remarkably relaxed way, and much testing of Norton machines took place there in the expert hands of the great D.R.O'Donovan. 'Don' was the brother-in-law of R.T.Shelley of Nortons, and was considered somewhat of a wizard in his ability to extract quite phenomenal speed from the side-valve engines. The system was that periodically a batch of newly finished engines would be sent down to Brooklands from the Birmingham factory, and each one would be fitted into O'Donovan's mobile test bed and pounded round the three mile saucer until he was fully satisfied that the units were giving the required power and speed. Upon completion of a satisfactory test, the engines were removed and duly returned to the Midlands where they would be installed in a production frame to await delivery to agent or customer. The mobile test bed possessed its own quite remarkable motor, and had

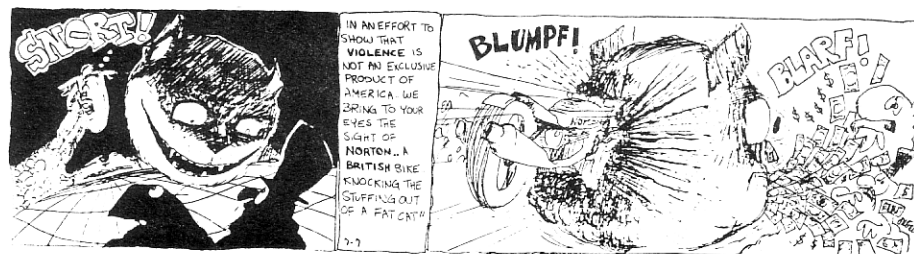
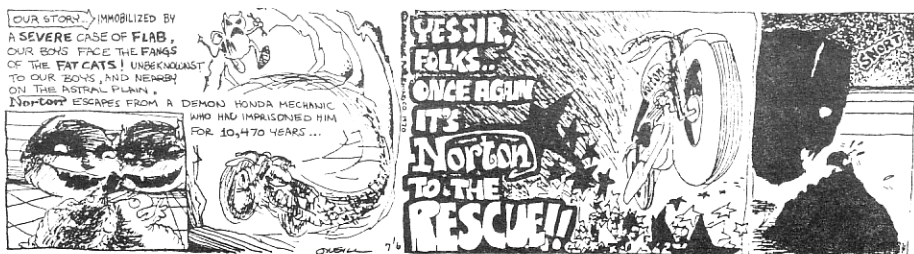
held many speed records at one time or another; affectionately known as 'Old Miracle' it must have first seen the light of day some time in 1912. The side-valve Norton engine had the now classic dimensions of 79mm bore and 100mm stroke giving a capacity of 490cc, and thus was a true long-stroke unit. Fortunately, 'Old Miracle' is still with us, having been owned by the late Graham Walker and now spending its autumn years at the Montague Museum at Beaulieu. It is ridden in the annual Pioneer Run to Brighton in March, and is still no mean performer. It is difficult to imagine that such a starkly simple machine, so very basic in appearance with its engine supported by the very lightest of frames, and with direct belt drive to the rear wheel, had secured some 112 World and British records before the First World War, its top speed being over 80mph.

A move was made to new premises in 1916 when, under contract to the Government, Nortons were producing motorcycles for the Russian military forces as well as other pieces of equipment, and the never-to-be-forgotten Bracebridge Street address came into being. But the time was four long years away when the bright young speedman of the twenties would leap aboard his sporting BRS model (Brooklands Road Special). Although James Norton was providing in his immediate post-war programme the three-speed chain-drive 'Big Four' model (Norton's own favorite and so-named because its capacity of 633cc was then rated as four horse power) plus single- and three-speed versions of the TT model, the classic BS and BRS were much sought after pieces by 'Sporty Boy' particularly. Although the two belt drives were slightly obsolete in these earliest years of the twenties, they still enjoyed a remarkable following, no doubt due to their fine turn of speed. The BRS was often supplied with a simple device known as the Phillipson Pulley, although this proprietary fitting was readily adaptable to most single-speed belt-driven machines. The system provided a form of variable gear, for the pulley, mounted on the crankshaft outer end, had flanges that would close or open in relation to the engine revolutions, thus raising or lowering the gear according to the work the engine was obliged to undertake. Indeed, it was possible for a skillful rider to keep the motor running when traffic was slow-moving, while the pure single-speed man, clutchless, was forever stopping and starting in town.

NEXT MONTH: Norton racing success in the 20's.

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

Beginning with this month's episode, and continuing for the next several months, very strange adventures in even stranger places await our heroes. Will it always be "Norton to the Rescue"?



Coming up next month: Fred, Hugh and \$Bill O'Brady launch the famous American counter-invasion expeditionary task force on Mars! And how will they get to Mars? Do you know what happens when you put a magic cookie in a Norton gas tank? Don't miss part one of the Mars expedition in the March NORTON NOTICE. Once again, my thanks to Dan O'Neill for letting us use ODD BODKINS.

STEVE