



# Norton Notice



The Newsletter of The Northern California Branch

NO. 57

FEB 1983

## FUTURE CLUB RIDES

February 13	Marin County
March 13	Mt. Hamilton
April 17	East Bay hills
May 14 & 15	Joint overnighiter with the So. Calif. NOC to Morro Bay
June 12	Beer bust (location not definite)
July 17	Old Timers ride (old motorcycles, that is)
August 18-21	Annual rally (location not definite)
September 11	Carmel Valley loop
October 16	Lake Tahoe overnighiter
November 13	Big Sur
December 11	Wine country
January 15	Sacramento Delta
February 12	Santa Cruz

This is only a tentative schedule at present. If you know of a good reason for changing any of these dates or places, call ride organizer Rich Stevenson at (415) 658-9941. An NFL football game is not a good enough reason! These dates don't interfere with any AMA racing dates in northern California as of this printing, although there are presently no firm Laguna Seca race dates, either AMA or AFM.



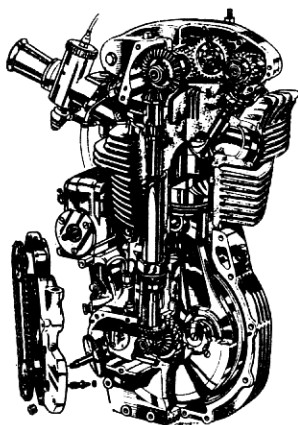
## 1983 EVENTS OF INTEREST IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA (accurate as of 1-18-83)

March 6	AFM road race	Sears Point
April 16	AMA mile	Sacramento
April 23	AFM road race	Sears Point
April 30	AMA short track	San Jose
May 1	AMA mile	San Jose
May 1	AFM road race	Sears Point
June 12	AFM road race	Sears Point
July 17	AFM road race	Sears Point
July 31	AFM road race	Sears Point
August 14	AFM road race	Sears Point
August 20 & 21	AMA road race	Sears Point
August 28	AFM road race	Sears Point
September 18	AMA mile	San Jose
Oct. 2	AFM road race	Sears Point
Oct. 30	AFM 4 hr. road race	Sears Point

## Norton Notice

is published monthly by the NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH of the NORTON OWNERS CLUB. Its sole purpose is to inform and entertain members regarding all aspects of the Norton Motorcycle including history, technical advice, and preservation of the marque.

Norton Notice is a reflection of its readership who are encouraged to submit any article, technical tip, joke, or photograph (original or otherwise), so long as it is in good taste, so that other Norton enthusiasts can enjoy it. For branch members who cannot attend meetings and rides, Norton Notice affords them an excellent opportunity to share experiences and information with the membership at large and to bring the branch members closer together. The deadline for items to be submitted for the following month's publication is the 20th of each month.



### PRESIDENT

Tom Dabel  
730 Linda Flora St.  
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### MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY/ TREASURER

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Rich Stevenson  
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### NORTON NOTICE EDITOR

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### RECORDING SECRETARY

Tim Coburn  
(415) 854-4364

MEMBERSHIP IN THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH OF THE NORTON OWNERS CLUB IS AVAILABLE IN THREE CATEGORIES:

FULL MEMBERSHIP: \$25.00/yr.  
ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00/yr  
SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP: \$10.00/yr

(OVERSEAS ASSOCIATE OR SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE U.S.\$20.00/YR.)

ALL MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE PAYABLE TO THE BRANCH TREASURER. RENEWAL DUES ARE PAYABLE AT THE END OF THE INDIVIDUAL'S MEMBERSHIP YEAR, THAT MONTH BEING DESIGNATED BY THE LAST NUMBER OF THE MEMBERSHIP NUMBER LOCATED ON THE MAILING LABEL OF NORTON NOTICE. EXAMPLE:

828/2

DENOTES MEMBER NUMBER 828 WITH DUES EXPIRING ON FEBRUARY 1st.

ALL CHANGES OF ADDRESS SHOULD GO TO THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY/TREASURER ONLY.

FULL MEMBERSHIP gives membership in the NORTON OWNERS CLUB with its benefits and privileges such as bi-monthly issues of ROADHOLDER MAGAZINE sent directly from England keeping members abreast of Norton owners activities from around the World, the SPARES PROGRAM that allows one to buy Norton parts directly from England at an attractive, low cost, and full voting privileges at all NOC and Branch meetings.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP is established for any Norton owner wishing to be associated with the Northern California Branch and are welcomed at all meetings, rides and other functions. Members are urged to become FULL MEMBERS as they become familiar with NOC advantages and benefits.

SOCIAL MEMBERSHIP is established for Norton enthusiasts who have not yet bought their Norton to become familiar with NOC and Branch functions and to assist them in finding a Norton suited to their needs. Although Social Members do not have Branch voting privileges, they are welcome with their ideas at all Branch functions.



## Upcoming Branch Events

DATE	TIME	PLACE	EVENT
February 10	7:30 P.M.	Rick's Swiss Chalet 4085 El Camino Way Palo Alto	February meeting
February 13	10:00 A.M.	Sausalito Ferry Landing	Marin County ride
March 10	7:30 P.M.	Edinburgh Castle 950 Geary St. San Francisco	March meeting
March 13	10:00 A.M.	Howard Johnsons, intersection of No. 1st and Highway 101 in San Jose	Mt. Hamilton ride

NOTICE: In the event of rain on the day of a club ride, the ride is automatically postponed one week. Also, riders should have plenty of gasoline by the scheduled departure time and all "personal problems" should be taken care of.

### JANUARY BRANCH MEETING

The January meeting was held at Edinburgh Castle in San Francisco on January 13, 1983, with approximately fifty people present.

OK, you guys, these are the last words of wisdom from yours truly as scribe. This year I'm doing the membership secretary and treasurer's job, so in the future send your dues, address changes, etc. to me.

The meeting started off brightly enough but soon got bogged down with the announcement by outgoing president Art Sirota that Norton Notice editor Gene Austin was unwilling to mail any future NN's that he compiled to a certain member of the club who shall remain nameless (let's just call him Steve) due to personal differences. An hour of debate went by, the end result being the following two passed motions:

1. That any officer of the club cannot decide on his own not to send a Norton Notice to a paid up member of the club.
2. That members cannot vote to throw another member out of the club for any reason. Gene resigned as Norton Notice editor and the new joint editors are Brian Halton and Robert Briscoe.

Next, votes were taken and counted for new branch officers who are:

President--Tom Dabel  
V.P./Ride Marshal --Richard Stevenson  
Recording Secretary--Tim Coburn  
Membership Sec./Treasurer--Phil Radford

Finally, the branch raffle took place, netting a profit of \$27 with the winners and prizes as follow:

1. \$25 gift certificate, donated by

Britalia Motors, won by Bob Grady.

2. Norton beer mug, donated by Ed Brooks, won by Dave Peterson.

3. Isle of Man poster, donated by Art Sirota, won by Dave Cronin.

4. Oil pressure adapter, donated by Bob Stiglitz, won by Ken Duffy.

Cheers,

Phil Radford

Editor's comments--The reason that I decided to withhold Steve Coburn's copy of the Norton Notice is because he has been a royal pain in the ass to me and the last two N.N. editors and I decided that I was not going to have anything more to do with him. I also could not see myself putting a good deal of time into the N.N. and then giving him a copy, thereby having a double standard. No one else has harrassed the past three N.N. editors to the extent that he has and I decided to do something about it. If you don't believe that a problem of continued verbal abuse has existed for several years, call past editors either Bob Marshall at (415) 851-1277 or Michael Heth at (714) 548-8361 to verify this. Because this issue surfaced at the last meeting, it at least serves as open recognition of the problem. It was the first time in the eleven years that this branch has been in existence that an attempt was made to throw a member out of the branch.

As Phil mentioned, I resigned as editor. If you members are willing to let this problem slide, I refuse to have anything to do with the N.N. The reason that I'm putting this issue

together is because the new editors asked me to continue until they are ready to take over. Let's hope that Brian and Robert don't have to put up with the crap that Michael, Bob, and I did.

Although I didn't bring up the subject of throwing a member out of the club at the January meeting, I feel that there should be a mechanism for removing undesirable elements from this club or any other organization. The ill-conceived second motion as mentioned in Phil's report above is too absolute and leaves the club powerless. For instance, how do you plan to enforce the first motion passed last month, or any other rule for that matter?

Gene

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE MEMBERSHIP

The fur sure did fly last month at the Club meeting! It's too bad, too, since I really don't enjoy political ballyhoo takin' up valuable Norton B.S. time at meetings. Still, I think the issue at hand deserves consideration in a more ordered forum.

It seems the issue boils down to this: Does the active membership of the Northern California Branch of the NOC have the power to oust an undesirable member? Putting aside the widespread personal conflicts between last month's member in question and the rest of the membership, I think there are, and will continue to be, situations where the participation of a given member should be denied. Not without good reason, not without fair consideration, and not without a majority vote. Nevertheless, the mechanism for "disenfranchisement" (Sirotaese for kickin' 'em out) must exist. The Club, as a social organization, must have the means to expel irritating, dangerous, or unsafe elements in order that the enjoyment of activities by the membership be guaranteed. I do the Norton thing for fun and if one member continues to generate friction with me and the membership at large, I want him/her out. Personnel problems are another matter entirely, but when one person continues to upset the appreciat in a very general way, it's time to seriously consider an ouster mechanism.

One point on last night's elections: For as long as I can remember this club has held nominations one month previous to the elections. Last night's "precedent" of nominate-'em and elect 'em shure looked more like a shotgun routine than an election to me. As I recall, the new nominee didn't even care to address the membership; how were we supposed to know if this chap would hold up his end? It's too late for this election, but I hope the election of future candidates will follow the rules established

for that purpose, thereby assuring everyone a fair chance.

Regards,  
Scot J. Marburger

FOR SALE

- N.O.C. paraphernalia as follows:
- 3" square machine badge.....\$6.00
- lapel pin..... 1.25
- 4 1/2" sticker..... 1.00
- 2" sticker..... .50
- key fob with club badge..... 1.50

- 3-color Northern California Branch lapel pin..... 1.50

Northern California Branch T-shirts (white shirts with blue and red logo as below) in large and medium sizes only. \$7.50 each, plus a dollar if you want it mailed.



Contact Carolyn Scott (phone (415) 968-5117) at 1970 Latham #14, Mountain View, Ca. 94040 to order by mail. Please send extra money to cover postage, and be reasonable. If you want your items thrown in a thin envelope so that the U.S. Postal Service can do a number on them, send only 20¢ extra. If you want a cushioned envelope like the Post Office sells, you'll have to send about a dollar to cover the cost of it and the postage.

Paper is always the strongest at the perforations.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH  
TOOL LOAN-OUT PROGRAM

If you need one or more of the following tools for working on your bike, get in touch with Harry Bunting and arrange to pick them up.

A refundable deposit equal to the replacement value of the tool is required at the time you pick them up.

<u>TOOL</u>	<u>DEPOSIT</u>
Timing cover oil seal guide	\$ 5.00
Rocker spindle puller	\$25.00
Crankshaft sprocket puller	\$12.00
Clutch spring tool	\$12.00
Clutch locking tool	\$18.00
Valve spring compressor	\$22.00

Harry Bunting (415) 968-2020 (home)  
1401 Gilmore St. (418) 735-1550 x2394  
Mountain View, Ca.

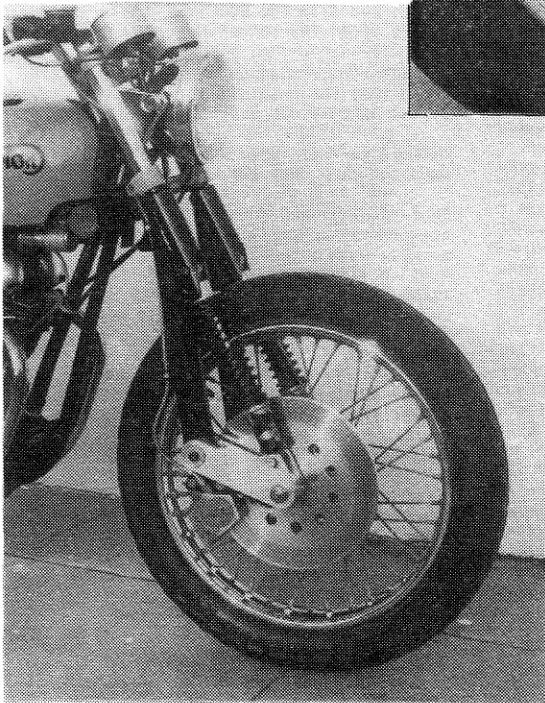
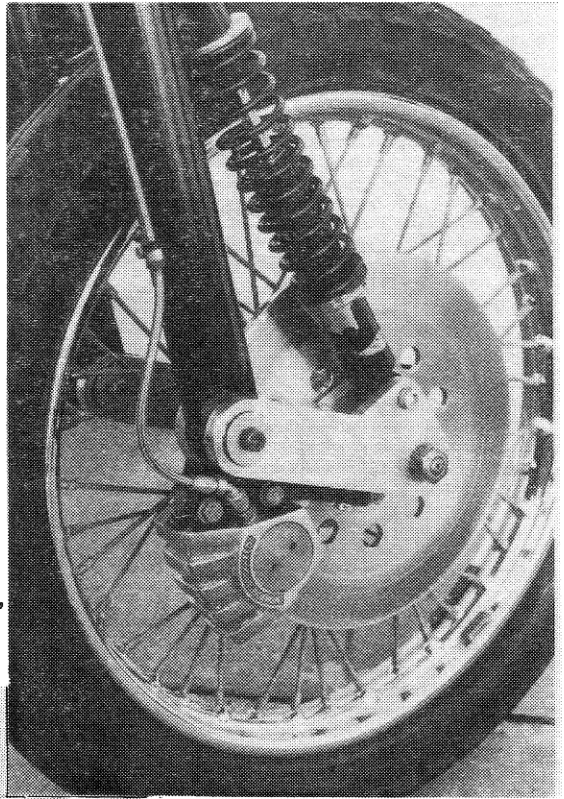
## LEADING LINK FORKS ON A NORTON?

First let me say this: I have nothing against Roadholder forks. Soon after these photos were taken I re-assembled the Norton with the proper components.

I built these forks as a project for several courses at school and because it was fun. The goal of the project was to build a fork with maximum lateral rigidity as highest priority. The theory was borrowed from research done on aircraft landing gear which suggested that the single most important feature of a stable castor is the lateral rigidity of the wheel support.

Translated to motorcycle terms, this means that to achieve stable handling, both wheels must be held as rigidly as possible to avoid side to side motion. (Both front and rear wheels are, in effect, castors.)

We've all had the experience of loose isolastics or swing arm pivot causing lateral motion of the rear wheel, and we know how that affects handling. Well, telescopic forks are inherently weak in the lateral direction due to bushing



clearances and tube flexibility. (Fork braces presumably help here.)

So, these forks were designed to allow six inches of vertical motion and virtually no lateral motion.

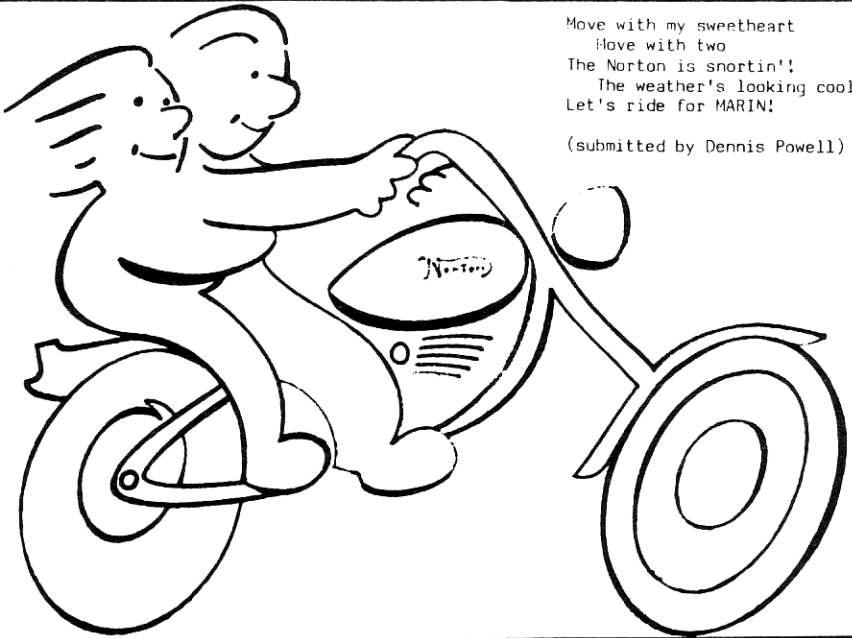
The links are made of 6061 aluminum and pivot on opposed tapered roller bearings to eliminate all clearances. The fork legs are 2 inch O.D. 4130 chrome-moly tubing.

Bench-top tests show that this fork is about four times as stiff as the Roadholder; road tests have yet to be done.

Now if only I could get them to look as good as the Roadholders.

*Jeff Michael*

Jeff Michael  
P.O. Box 1014  
Half Moon Bay, Ca.  
94019



Move with my sweetheart  
 Move with two  
 The Norton is snortin'!  
 The weather's looking cool -  
 Let's ride for MARIN!

(submitted by Dennis Powell)

#### MOTORCYCLING TERMS

#### A BETTER DEAL ON PAST ISSUES OF THE NORTON NOTICE!

The following issues of the Norton Notice are now available from your current N.N. editor. Each issue is now only 50¢ each, which includes postage. Checks can be made payable to the "Norton Owners Club". If I run out of a particular issue, I'll refund your money for that issue. Act now—these issues will probably end up lining trash cans soon!

ISSUE	QUANTITY AVAILABLE
January 1980	1
March "	3
April "	23
May "	23
August "	7
Sept/Oct "	19
November "	23
December "	23
January 1981	8
March "	6
June "	2
August "	3
September "	4
October "	2
May 1982	7
June "	11
July "	17
August "	19
September "	15
October "	24
November "	24
December "	24

(reprinted from the Southern California Norton Owners Club - branch of the USNOA - newsletter)

rebuild--Could mean anything, but generally means that the head gasket has been replaced in the last 10,000 miles.

overhauled--Less than a rebuild, an overhaul usually means that the head gasket was re-used.

tune-up--This means that the plugs were cleaned and gapped and the points were adjusted, usually with a rock.

carbs rebuilt--This means the carbs were removed, soaked in solvent, and reinstalled with new gaskets and torqued to the recommended 150ft/lbs.

carbs overhauled--Same as above, but with gaskets made from a kitty litter box.

cylinder bored--This could be like going to a GL1000 road ride.

stroke--The kid who wants to ride your motorcycle. He'll have the money on Sunday.

motor's built--This means the cylinder is on its last overbore and the air filter is missing.

velocity stack--A device for collecting road dirt and funneling it into your motor.

All in fun, folks.  
 Bill Getty

## USNOA ANNUAL RALLY 1983

Dear Gene,

As you may know by now the United States Norton Owners Association is having its annual rally on the 20-24th of July in Flagstaff, Arizona. I would like to invite you and all the members of the Northern California Branch of the Norton Owners Club to our "Rally on the Rim".

Ride Safe,

John Ebert  
 '83 Rally Chairman  
 2018 W. Mulberry  
 Phoenix, Arizona 85015

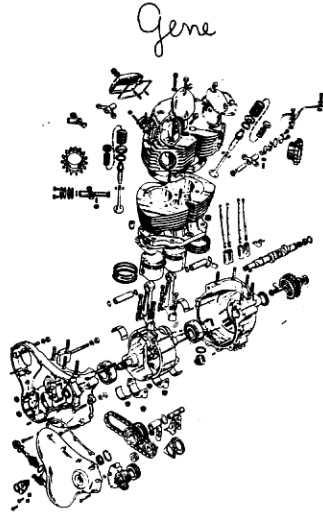
## VALVE LASH CAPS AND COMPRESSION PLATES

If you're thinking about putting lash caps on the ends of your valves, you should avoid P.M. brand (distributed locally by Rocky Cycles). I put a set on the intake valves of my Combat engine last spring and they didn't last two thousand miles before both had craters worn in them deep enough that you could hear the result of the excess clearance. And the visible damage to the lash caps was worse than the noise!

Fortunately, the valve adjusting screws were not damaged. I'm presently using Manley brand lash caps and they look as good as new after more than 5,000 miles of use. Manley lash caps can be bought at automotive speed shops (but expect to buy a set of 16 for about \$35) or at some decent bike shops where you can buy one or two at a time. Crane (of camshaft fame) also list lash cap sets for 5/16" valve stems (such as Nortons or Dodge Hemis) but I had a set of sixteen on order from a local car parts house for six months before I got fed up and cancelled the order. If you want to try your luck, the Crane part number is 99420, but be forewarned--I even called the Crane headquarters in Florida and still couldn't get any. Lash caps, that is.

If you have a 750 Combat you might find there is insufficient clearance between the end of the rocker arm itself (not the valve adjusting screw) and the end of the valve to make installation of lash caps possible. On my engine there was less clearance than the thickness of the lash cap so I waited until the intake valves had pockets about .020" deep before I took the head off. That was at 37,000 miles, by the way. The ends of the valves had to be ground anyway, so I had them shortened by 3/32" so that the lash caps would fit. I would have shortened the push rods as well if I had left everything else as it was, but as this particular Combat wasn't running very well on the so-called Ethyl gasoline recently, I installed a .030" compression

plate beneath the cylinders. The compression plate dropped the compression ratio to just slightly higher than a standard Commando 750 and it now runs much better. What good is higher compression if you can't fully open the throttle? For those of you who have Combat engines and want to reduce the compression, compression plates are available through the N.O.C. parts program as part number 06-6591 and listed for £1.50 as of December 1982. The head and barrels of a 750 engine can be removed as a single unit so that you don't have to mess with pushrods (except checking for correct positioning at the end of the job) and this makes it a "piece of cake" to install the compression plate. Be sure to adjust the valves after installing the compression plate as there should be .026" extra clearance at the valves (figured on a .030" compression plate and a 1.13 to 1 rocker arm ratio). I'll bet you're confused now!



## LETTER FROM THE ROADHOLDER EDITOR

Hi there, all USA NOccers,

As I have the pleasure of receiving your contributions to Roadholder, have had numerous personal letters from quite a few of you, and have also gratefully received copies of your Norton Notice, well, I thought it about time I wrote a little contribution to your magazine by way of a thank you.

It has been nice to hear from Art Sirota, Gene Austin, Steve Coburn (who I believe has moved away from your immediate area), and one or two others. Sorry if I've missed your name out.

I'd love to accept the various invitations I've had over the past three years to come out

and see you all and especially to visit one of your Great Rallies; the one you had planned this last year sounded great. Unfortunately, family commitments preclude a visit just yet. But if and when I do manage to come I would like to do a three month trip and bring the bike and really do it in style. However, the better half does not seem so keen to pillion it these days so you could even see me over with you in a, wait for it....CAR. The other way to do it might be to buy a machine when I get over and mix the traveling a bit. Anyway, I feel it will be some years until finances, time, and my family allow for a USA trip, but I'll get to you somehow.

Meanwhile, congratulations on your Norton Notice and its varying contents. It's really very interesting and nice to see what can be done on a shoestring.

All the best in '83.

Keep upright,

*Al (II) Tritten*

Al Tritten  
51 Coach Road  
Hamble,  
Southampton,  
England SO3 5LA

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Gordon's First Law: If a research project is not worth doing, it is worth not doing well.

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#### REAL COPS

(The following article is reprinted from Ray Orrock's column in the San Ramon Valley Herald)

One of the biggest sellers of the 1983 publishing year was a book by Bruce Feirstein titled *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche*, a hilarious chronicle of macho preferences and behavior.

Since *Real Men Don't Eat Quiche* is a takeoff on the macho posture--and since the quintessential macho figure in society today is the cop, who's the closest thing we have to the old western gunslinger, and who would never use a word like "quintessential"--it seems only logical that, sooner or later, someone would come along and do a cop takeoff on the book. And somebody has.

His name is Mark Miller, he's a police officer in Pasadena, and his article *Real Cops Don't Eat Doughnuts* appeared in 10-35, the newsletter of the South Pasadena Police Officer's Association.

The title, of course, comes from the fact that movie and TV cops are frequently shown sitting in a patrol car, drinking coffee and eating doughnuts.

"On-duty Real Cops drink coffee and drink it black," says Miller, "but they never eat doughnuts on duty. They call them "gut bombs."

Here are a few other excerpts from *Real Cops Don't Eat Doughnuts*:

"Professional bouncers and NFL linebackers have good backgrounds for becoming Real Cops, as do steel workers and longshoremen.

"Few authors, English teachers, nuns, or interior decorators make it to the ranks of Real Cops.

"Real Cops like civilians to call them "Officer"; while their friends call them by their last names. Really close friends may address Real Cops by their nicknames. Real Cops have nicknames like "Bubba", "Slugger", "Animal", and "Babe".

"REAL COP HEROES: Clint Eastwood, Archie Bunker, J. Edgar Hoover, Charles Bronson, Judge Roy Bean, Samuel L. Colt, Ronald Reagan, Alvin York, Dr. Richard J. Gatling, John Wayne, and the entire Spanish Inquisition.

"REAL COP ANTI-HEROES: Jerry Brown, Erik Estrada, Timothy Leary, Richard Simmons, Charles Manson, Rose Bird, and the entire U.S. Supreme Court."

"Real Cops wear sunglasses day and night.

"Real Cops polish their badges, but only when they know an inspection is coming up. They preserve the finish with spar varnish... never with nail polish.

"Real Cops work in uniform. They wear custom-tailored wool, summer and winter alike. You could cut yourself on their military creases. They don't wear whistle lanyards.

"Underneath his uniform, a Real Cop wears a T-shirt and white, genuine "Jockey" brand underwear. He doesn't wear colored shorts, leopard-skin shorts, low-rise briefs, fish-net, Calvin Klein shorts, or anything made by Fruit-Of-The-Loom..."

Miller Lists some of the words used by Real Cops. Among them are: barfbag, dirtbag, dogbreath, hairball, maggot, puke, punk, scumbag, slimeball and wimp.

He also lists some of the words that Real Cops never use, including: antisocial, homopath, awesome, detente, dialogue, maladjusted, miscreant, perpetrator, rapport, recidivist and tubular.

He notes, however, that these latter words may be used by Real Cops when being interviewed by the press.

"A Real Cop's patrol car is black and white. He might drive an all-white unit if forced to,



but he would never set foot in one painted with pastel colors or color-accent stripes... The Real Cop's patrol car is equipped with a de-smogged V-8 and a heavy-duty alternator. It burns leaded gas and always smells like scorched asbestos. The air-cleaner lid is turned upside-down so the car breathes better -- or it may have been thrown away altogether. A Real Cop never checks the oil or water... he just drives his assigned unit as fast as it will go until the engine pukes, then calls for a tow truck and walks away from it."

"Real Cops wear as distinctive a uniform off duty as they wear on duty. Real Cops wear genuine Levis, western shirts from Sears Roebuck, and baseball caps with the initials of their agency. Real Cops do not wear designer jeans, Dolphin shirts, Alligator shirts, Hawaiian floral prints, or gold chains."

"REAL COPS drive with their window rolled down, rain or shine. They write citations for 20 over the limit. They don't stop cars with burnt-out license-plate lamps; they stop them for exhibition of speed, vehicular manslaughter and drunk driving.

"Real Cops work radar out of the car, standing in the number one lane. They hold the radar unit in a two-handed combat stance and flag down the offenders. A driver always stops for a Real Cop."

You betcha. I know I would.

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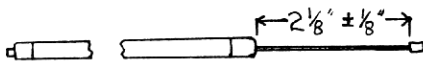
#### CABLE OPERATED MIKUNI CHOKES

Are those of you with dual Mikuni carburetors aware that there is a cable operated choke conversion available and that you can use your stock choke lever and cable with a little modification to the cable? By using the cable operated chokes you don't have to get near your carbs and can keep both hands on the handlebars while starting your bike instead of having your left hand below the fuel tank while fiddling with the choke or chokes so that you look like a monkey making love to a football!

The conversion kits can be ordered from your friendly neighborhood bike dealer, consist of about five small parts per carb, and cost about \$5 each. Ask your dealer to look through the catalog of Mikuni parts to find the conversion kits; the different parts distributors use different numbers for the kits, so I won't bother you with superfluous part numbers.

The stock Commando upper choke cable will work as is, but the twin lower choke cables must be shortened (or replaced with shorter cables if you can find some with the correct dimensions) so that the free length of the cable is correct. You need between 2" to 2 1/4" of free cable with the cables discon-

nected from the plastic junction of the choke cable assembly.



You can get new ends for the cables or you can try to use the original ones over after unsoldering them and moving them to the correct spot on the cable. If you want new terminals (or whatever the correct terminology is) you can forget about trying to get them at a Jap bike shop. Try a British or European bike shop first--they are more likely to have what you want and know what you're talking about. If you buy new terminals, take the matching part from the choke kit so that you get terminals that fit within the cable slot.

This conversion can also be done to a single Mikuni set-up if you like the idea of having the choke lever on the handlebars. The stock cables could be used if you left one of the lower cables off and plugged the hole in the plastic junction with silicone seal or some such sealant, although a full length single cable would look nicer.

*Gene*

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#### Futility Factor:

No experiment is ever a complete failure - it can always serve as a negative example.

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#### JEWELLED ESCAPEMENT: EVOLUTION OF A CAFE RACER

I wrote this story nine years ago. Of the machines mentioned in it, most are not currently being manufactured. Several manufacturers, then real forces to be reckoned with, are but memories, and Japan's all-dominant products today bear little resemblance to the machines they produced in the '60's. Gas was cheap, the octane rating high, the laws less stringent. Motorcycling, indeed society, has changed markedly in the interim--or has it? Come back with me to a time when the bark of a British vertical twin echoed across the American landscape.

I started riding motorcycles as a teenager in the midwestern Ohio farm country in the early 1960's, teething on MoPeds, Honda 50's, and the like. At that time, BSA's and Triumphs were the most popular. Owners of these lean and sporty mounts were in a constant and strong rivalry with owners of the portly Harley. Call a Harley owner's machine "hog", and you instantly bought yourself a heap of trouble. Occasionally, you might have seen a BMW. Nortons were

reverently spoken of--especially the legendary Manx--but were rarely seen. The occasional Ducati 250 Diana Mk III raised everybody's eyebrows with its good performance for its relatively small size. Once, I saw an Ariel Square Four. It sounded like an Austin-Healey Sprite coming down the road. Two motorcycle publications were standard reading fare in Central Ohio at that time--Cycle World, and Floyd Clymer's Cycle. Other publications in the field were just unobtainable, and therefore unknown.

Dick Klamfoth, one of the locals who rose to fame by racing motorcycles, started a Honda dealership in his home town of Groveport, Ohio. He sold a blue million of the things, and in the process helped to alter the local opinion that "everything from Japan was copied from elsewhere, and was junk". He later moved to bigger and greener pastures in Columbus. Saturdays were spent visiting all the local dealerships to see if anything new had appeared during the week, and to swap stories. While the Klamfoth digs were well-lit, spacious, and rather "antiseptic", it was more fun to go visit the greasy, inadequately lit, parts-piled-in-a-corner shops that were always seemingly located down alleys. There was always some neat old carcass in a mound of junk to speculate over. Red Bryan's alcohol-fueled BSA hill-climber at his back alley BMW-BSA shop was a must. So was the 250 Ducati road racer that McGraw Cycle Sales used to campaign at places like Nelson Ledges, and Daytona--places we had just read about. The Ducati road racer was a sculpture of lean, sinewy excitement. It was maximum visual impact. The eye traveled down that exceedingly long angular gas tank to the notch for a seat, terminating with a hump at the end. A silver-gray fiberglass fairing clothed all in aerodynamically determined contours. Clip-on handlebars. Always the questions...

"How fast'll it go?"

"How many races did it win?"

"How much horsepower hazit got?"

"Who rides it?"

The only other object that rivaled the Ducati was a V-8 Chevy-powered Harley down at A.D. Farrow's. Stories floated about as to how they had taken it to a stretch of unopened freeway once, and how only one person present had had the balls to turn the thing on wide open. Once. Nobody in authority ever gave credence to any of the stories circulating about that mother. It added to the fun.

Dirt tracking was the popular form of race in Central Ohio then. Some, but not many people, rode around in the Hocking Hills, some fifty miles south, on Matchless 500 singles and the like. The Columbus Charity Newsies Half-Mile National "classic" was the big race of the year. Mass bike

pilgrimage to Columbus from all over. Nobody parked his bike beside one of a different make. Eight thousand motorcycles at the Ohio State Fairgrounds from as far away as South Carolina, and all were in groups of marque. Hondas in one area, Harleys in another, Triumphs and BSA's in another. "King of the Highway" accessory groups; the Motormaidens of America riding formation around the track prior to the National Anthem. And the comments:

"First time I ever saw a hog on a hog!"

"Hey--do you believe that?" says someone pointing, "There's a poodle in that pod on her back fender!"

"See any tattoos on their arms?"

"Where's the seat?" (Guffaw).. et cetera, et cetera.

And after the National Anthem was stood through, came all that noise! All that infectious excitement! Bikes spewing rooster tails of red dirt centrifugally off the track all over the crowd. Budweiser beer cans. Hotdogs...

I was off to college. A pictorial setting. Midwest. Protected. Settled. Quiet. Berkeley and UCLA had hippies and long-haired radicals. Some guy named Mario Salvio was pushing something called the "Free Speech Movement" at Berkeley. My parents were disgusted. "Thank God he's going to Miami (Ohio)," my mother said. But not all was lost. Three-two beer, riotous parties, and football helped to divert a significant amount of attention from books. At Miami, autos and motorcycles were banned. Nobody got to have one. In the school catalog, they suggested that you find another school if you didn't care for the rules on motor vehicles. We all went along; we thought we could live with the rules. Some of us found later we couldn't. My roommate got into trouble with the university over the discovery of his '57 Chevy in town. The girl who said he could keep it at her place happened to live right next to the Dean of Men.

I fell in with a bunch of characters, one of whom was a died-in-the-wool Indian fan. Bob's dad had three Indian fours, and Bob rode an immaculate '48 flathead V-twin. Suicide clutch, tank shift--the works. Even the plastic Indian head on the front fender lit up when you turned the nine lights on.

We all decided to sneak our bikes "onto campus". They were kept on the enclosed back porch of a house in town. My bike at the time was a relatively rare 1962 Honda 125cc Benly Super Sport. It sported a big humpy silver-gray gas tank with depressions in the sides for your knees. Rear sets. Shift linkage went from the transmission back to the peg. Neat. The drum brakes were about the size of those found on a

Honda 305, and they had air scoops in them. Fine mesh screens covered the holes. The tach went up to 14,000 RPM, and the bike had absolutely no torque below 8,000. The power band was super narrow, and if the right gear was not selected at the right time on exiting a corner, you were dead. A Honda Super 90 could out pull ya. But boy, did it sound good on the boil! Almost like a Yamaha coming down the road--only better, because it was a FOUR STROKE. Lots of whines coming out of the gear box. I could play Mike Hailwood with it.

We used to race on the roads in Heuston Woods State Park, near Oxford, Ohio. Some guy on a TT Triumph had the lap record. Evenings at dusk, and Sunday mornings were the best times to "get it on". Nobody except a lone fisherman or two was around. The road was clear of station wagons and park patrol, and the mist enshrouded curves over hills and through the damp fresh-smelling woods were all the more illusory. You could envision yourself at Nurburg or someplace, riding an MV Four. Occasionally, we'd find a sports car or two running the road like we were. And once again, all concerned would dice it out--trying to prove which configuration of wheels--two or four--was really superior on a road course. We must have run into more than our share of inexperienced sports car drivers, because the bikers usually won easily. It was fun to hang onto his tail. Push him. See if you could pass him--shifting into a higher gear right by his door--gracefully winging past and swinging into the next curve, all in one fluid motion.

The old 125 usually wasn't up to passing except on curves. Its "gut acceleration" wasn't anything to write home about. Eighty one MPH wasn't either, now that I think about it. But the illusion was. By this time, small two-strokes like Yamaha's 100cc twin were pushing the humpy-tanked Benley hard no matter how neat it looked. Some of us four-strokers had to admit that quite a few Japanese two-strokes did indeed "get it on"--better than some of us did.

I got commissioned in the Navy at the end of college. The Honda went into mothballs in the parents' garage while I went South to my first duty station. After being shuttled around the country, I found myself on the West Coast in San Francisco sans bike. Stories of Route One, and the cafe racers that haunted its curves had filtered through even to the Midwest years before. I made a pilgrimage, and saw a Sunday Morning Ride--by that time institutionalized by nearly a decade of practice. All kinds of bikes were out there. Even the BMW's had clip-ons. There was lots of noise, go-fast, good riders and the Marin County Sheriff, who was at war with the bikers.

I got sent to Southeast Asia before getting to try all this out for myself. When I got

home though, I was accompanied by a Honda 500 Four. The Japanese home version. Three hundred other bikes came back from Japan on that aircraft carrier, too. They were tied down to the hangar deck in and around airplanes, and were even down in the bomb magazines. All the carriers were coming from WESTPAC loaded like that. It must have given local motorcycle dealers fits. I unpacked my new dueling foil and assembled it in the hangar at the Naval Air Station in Alameda. Honda 305 straight handlebars went on. Mirrors from West Germany sprouted from the handlebar tips. It looked neat.

Jousting on Route One went well. I found I was average--not exceedingly fast; not exceedingly slow. Sometimes, I really got "smoked"; others, I had the upper hand. Choppers were fun to pick on. But hailing that 500 through the curves on numerous Sunday morns was work! One day, I ran into a guy in front of a restaurant in Olema. He had a black Norton Commando. Brand new. Droopy handlebars. There was a guttural "blat" to the exhaust note. We went to San Francisco back down Route One. He was effortless through the curves. To pass another vehicle, he'd just nonchalantly add a little more gas. Backing down, down-shifting; taking that left hander... Accelerating. Shift. Catching the right-hander. What grace! I had to have a Norton someday..

One day, I was walking down Valencia St. in San Francisco, casually checking out all the wares in the various motorcycle shops. I was hoping I'd see one of those new V-twin Ducati's. I happened to stop at a Triumph dealership. Sitting on the showroom floor was a Norton Production Roadracer. All stock. It had a yellow fiberglass tank, clip-ons, alloy rims that said, "fabrique en Ingleterra", Girling shocks, Avon "Racemaster" tires, and a sticker on the front fork near the disc brake that said, "Parking permit--U.C. Santa Barbara". Honest-to-goodness number plates were right behind the seat. Venturi stacks were on the concentric Amals, leaving no room for an air cleaner. You had to fold one foot peg to get it started. The price tag said \$1295. After a hurried discussion with the dealer--he could see I was hooked--I took it out for a ride in the afternoon traffic. Nearly wrecked it at the first corner. You see, the headlight and the instrument cluster don't turn when the handlebars do. They're all mounted to that bracket poking from between the forks that holds part of the fairing on. First gear was unbelievably tall! The bike was equipped with the European continental lighting system. There is a cluster of buttons and switches on the fork crown right next to the amp meter. Push the correct button, and the headlight flashes. All the weirdo little features, including a parking light bulb in the headlight, stimulated me to the point of no return.

"How much do you want down to hold it for me?" said I.

"What have ya got?" queried the dealer.  
"Twelve dollars."

A studied pause--one the dealer had obviously spent some time in perfecting. "Ten dollars'll hold it," he said.

"Good! Here's your money. I'll pick up the bike and pay you the rest Tuesday," I yelled, running out the door.

That yellow Norton looks exotic. It impresses the hell out of motorcycle exotica nuts who lay eyes on it. Its exhaust note stimulates to the point of obscurity. But the thing doesn't idle worth a damn. And it heats up in traffic. It really wasn't built for everyday traffic conditions, and it lets you know it. You can break every speed limit posted in the U.S. effortlessly--in third. When you're out on the road, people look at you, which was neat for the first week or so. Only people in Porsche 911's or on other Nortons wave. Chopper freaks concentrate on ignoring you. Cops take a special interest. That yellow color doesn't help any. A twisting road like California Route One is the only kind that brings to attention the Norton's attributes.

I got a ticket out there once. It was north of San Francisco in Marin County. Under violations, the ticket says, "22349 VC-- Exceeding the maximum speed limit." Speed was "approximately 70; max 65; safe 45; Location of violation(s)--S/B (sharp bend) SR 1, North of X-mas Tree Ranch, approximately one mile." That's just a little north of Stinson Beach. I had seen the patrol car coming from the opposite direction a few curves ahead, so I "cooled it". They stopped. I went past in third, doing about 60. Made it around the next curve. They couldn't see me any more. I checked out the rear view mirror. No cops. Kick up the pace a little.. Next curve. Go a little faster... They must be gone, now... As I was really getting down to "getting it on" through the next "S", there appeared in the mirror flashing lights, siren, and a black Dodge in a four-wheel skid coming up behind me. "Shit." I pulled over, and both cops got out.

"You really had it laid over through that last curve. Didn't you see me signal you to stop back there?" said the thin man in Polaroid shades, thumb over shoulder.

"No--did you signal... ..uh, sir?"

"I sure did. You'd better pay attention. This bike yours? Let's see your registration!"

"It's not with me. I've got it back at home. ...back in Alameda."

"Looks like this bike'll go pretty fast," said the fat one, as he kicked up little clouds of dust, walking in lazy arcs around the Norton. "Who won the race this morning?"

"What race? Was there a race somewhere this morning?"

"You know--the race they had out here this morning," stated the fat one, eyeing me for any reactions.

I kind of half-smiled. Then wiped off the expression. Poker face again. "Hey look, I wasn't out here this morning. It was too cold. (truth) Did they have a race?" (lie)

Silence on the other side. Contemplation. Study of the ground. The fat one draws a line in the dirt with a dusty boot.

"Bet you come out here a lot, don't you? Like every Sunday."

"No Sir. I've been on Temporary Duty on the East Coast for the last few weeks."

A look of non-belief on the fat trooper's countenance. The thin one broke in. "You see, we're out here to keep people from getting killed. All the motorcyclists have turned it into a big game. We got thirteen of them and ran them in for racing a while back. But there's an easy Marin County Judge who let them all off. He said we couldn't prove all of them were speeding. That's what we're up against. Now it's your prerogative whether or not you want to see us again. I'd suggest you cool it, and ride somewhere else."

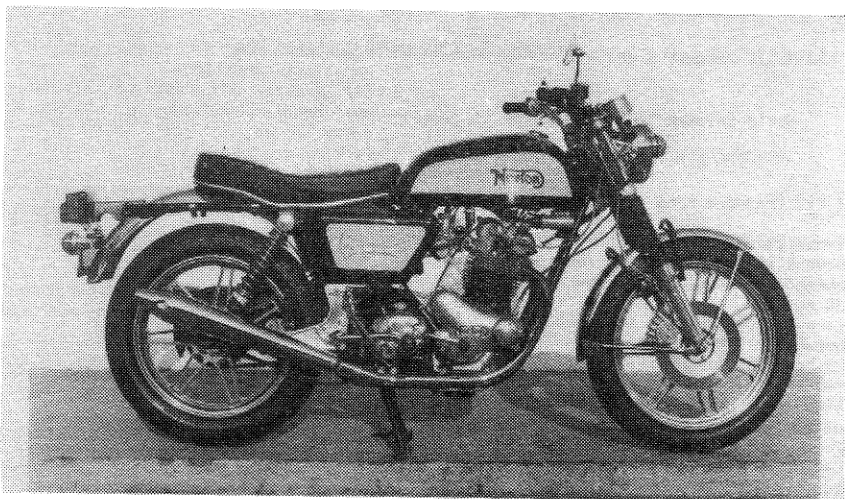
With that, I was handed a ticket/summons to appear in the Marin County Court. The same building Angela Davis went to trial in. I hoped I'd get the easy judge. The black Dodge peeled out in the dirt. One tire screeched when they hit the pavement, troopers slouched low in the seat.

When my day came, I had to post \$57.00 bond, and was sentenced to a session or two in traffic school. Over in the Oakland High School, because that's closer to Alameda. Upon successful attendance, I got my \$57.00 back, and a little mark on my driving record.

That experience slowed me down some. I now have a hunt underway for a less watched road--one where you can kite through tree-arched curves--accelerate down the straight, and down-shift for that next left-hander. Cafe racing is Walter Mitty at his zenith. Alternately tension building, and tension relief, it is jeweled escapement.

submitted by: Dick Rutter  
610 Taylor Ave.  
Alameda, Ca. 94501

Skinner's Constant: That quantity which, when multiplied by, divided by, added to or subtracted from the answer you get, gives you the answer you should have gotten.



This is a photograph of the editor's '72 Combat with Campbray cast aluminum wheels installed. This is the type of wheel that Bob Marshall tried to obtain as a group purchase from the manufacturer in England about two years ago. A minimum of six pairs was required to get a price break, but only three people made firm commitments so the deal fell through. I visited London about eighteen months ago and managed to order a pair at the price of £150 (about \$300 at the time), which included shipping. Due to several problems, which I won't go into here, I didn't get possession of both wheels until last December. The wheels are no longer being made but as a point of interest, here they are. The front wheel is WM3-19 and the rear is WM4-18, WM2-19 being standard Commando front and rear. They were supposed to be "bolt on", but you know how that is--"bolt on" parts take a week to install and "universal" parts only take two weeks!

The fuel tank, seat, and sidecover set-up on the bike are genuine Norton Long Range Fastback. I realize the tank looks like a modified Atlas unit, but you can check your 750 Commando parts manuals if you haven't seen 'em before.

## TRADING POST

THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR PRIVATE ADS. NORTON-RELATED ADS RUN FOR TWO MONTHS, UNLESS RESUBMITTED.

### WANTED:

Norton single in good mechanical shape.

Tom Kelly (916) 877-6450 weekends

### WANTED:

Genuine Norton production racer seat (not a Ron's Cycle copy).

James Nakamura (no phone)  
121 E. Yanonali St.  
Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101

### WANTED:

Cherry exhaust and seat for Norton Electra.

Norm Kelley (415) 566-1612

### FOR SALE:

- '74 850 Roadster with chrome tank, 2 into 1 exhaust, shop manual, and some spare parts. 7,000 miles, second owner, \$1,700 or best offer.
- Dunstall steering dampener, \$50 or offer.

P.M. Scholzen (209) 368-9093, home  
(209) 466-9172, work

### WANT TO TRADE:

850 "flame ring" head gasket in exchange for a 750 "flame ring" head gasket. Or will sell the 850 gasket for \$8.

Gene Austin (415) 573-9559 evenings

WANTED:

Stock 850 MKIII exhaust pipes with crossover pipe.

David Salomon (415) 550-1864

FOR SALE: (reduced from last month)

1. Transmission gears, \$15 each.
2. Lucas RITA ignition, less rotor, \$30
3. Commando connecting rods, excellent, \$30 each.
4. New 850 +.020" piston set, \$55.
5. Commando clutch basket, \$15.
6. T15 brake backing plate, \$20.
7. Grab rail with clamps, perfect, \$15.
8. Atlas seat, original cover, \$35.
9. Roadster seat with new upholstery, \$40.
10. Brand new pair of Atlas mufflers, \$95.
11. Cush drive rear wheel, perfect, \$20.
12. Stock valves, \$6 each.
13. Alternator stators, \$30 each.
14. Hardened Commando clutch hub, \$25.
15. P-11 engine, less head, \$90
16. Brand new 33 piece forged and polished 1/2" drive socket set, \$100 new, \$35.
17. Chrome oil tank for P-11 or N-15, \$15.
18. Commando horn, \$8.
19. Set of those expensive Lucas turn signals, \$45.
20. Excellent 750 head, \$98.
21. "S" model central oil tank, \$20.
22. Red Atlas gas tank, excellent, no dents, \$65.
23. Original factory 750 or 850 shop manual, \$15.
24. Every other part you could imagine for your Norton at ridiculously low prices.

Ya ain't never gonna see Norton parts this cheap agin, so git off yer duff an' give me a call between 6 & 9 P.M. an' stock up on stuff you know yer gonna need!

Harvey (408) 255-7356 6-9 P.M.

FOR SALE:

1. '73 750 Roadster with overhauled motor and transmission, but has a few problems. \$1,200.
2. '59 Matchless 600cc Typhoon single. Animal. \$2,100.
3. '58 Matchless 650cc G-12. \$950.
4. Windjammer III fairing with all hardware for Commando. \$160.
5. New Fastback tank. \$130.
6. Dunstall tank and seat for Commando. \$90.
7. Norton Model 7 tank. \$130.
8. Stock water slide decals for Atlas tank. \$2.50 each.
9. Lots of other stuff.
10. Trade for Triumphs and Nortons.

Norm Kelley (415) 566-1612

FOR SALE:

1. Black Bell Star II, size 7 5/8, in excellent condition.
2. All original John Player Norton fiberglass dual headlamp fairing, windscreen, seat, front fender, and petrol tank cover with locking cap as provided to Norton by Avon. Includes steel petrol tank, all bracketry and fasteners, headlights, tail light, turn signals, clip-on bars, mirrors, wiring and switches, etc. Will sell as a complete set only. In excellent condition. \$1,200.
3. Original "black chrome" JPN exhaust pipes with crossover and unused "black chrome" JPN silencers.

Richard Eyler (408) 289-4452, work  
(408) 338-3058, home

FOR SALE:

Two 2 1/2 gallon BSA Goldstar gas tanks, no dents, ready to chrome. \$175 each.

Dick Klatt (714) 998-2999 (home)  
(714) 630-2554 (work)

FOR SALE:

1. Used mainshafts for pre-Commando AMC gearboxes, in excellent condition, \$10 ea.
2. New Commando 20 tooth countershaft sprocket, \$20.
3. Used pre-71 Commando headlight dimmer/flasher/horn switch and harness assembly, \$15.
4. Used Atlas front wheel and SLS brake assembly, complete, \$25.
5. Used Atlas rear wheel and brake assembly, complete, \$25.
6. Used chrome Dunlop WM2-19 rim in good condition, \$10.
7. Used front Commando isolastic assembly, \$10.
8. Two used pre-MKIII Commando engine cradles, \$25 each.
9. Used 750 Commando swing arm, \$30.
10. Two 12 volt Lucas coils from late Atlas or 650 (coils made 6/67), \$5 each.
11. Pair of black 145 lb./in. Girling springs, free.
12. '71-'74 stock rear wheel with bearings and seals installed. Wheel was recently professionally trued. Ready to mount a tire, \$50.
13. All the small parts and hardware needed to convert your box section Commando head steady to the MKIII style, \$10.

Gene Austin (415) 573-9559

FOR SALE:

'73 Combat Interstate, several Triumphs and NSUs, a BMW R50, Greeves, Ducati, and Puch motorcycles, 24 in all. (Pretty vague, huh?-ED.)

Tom Kelley (916) 877-6450 weekends

FOR SALE:

1. 850 Commando frame. November '73, SN #310370, \$200.
2. 850 Commando engine, complete and good standard bore, SN #310370, \$295.
3. 850 Commando frame. March '74. First registered March '75. SN #313960. Has slight kink in left down tube, \$125.
4. Complete 850 front end. Wheel, forks, sliders, disc, caliper, master cylinder, brake hose, lever, wheel spindle, the lot only \$240.
5. 850 top & bottom triple clamps, (yokes), \$40.
6. Stiffen up your 750 swinging arm with an 850 version, \$40.
7. 850 wiring harness, complete with handle-bar control cables, \$40.
8. 850 Box-section head steady, convert your 750, only \$25.
9. 850 square type rear light unit, complete with indicators & lens, \$35.
10. 850 stainless rear fender, excellent condition, \$25.
11. 850 stainless front fender with stays and center bracket, \$25.
12. 850 oil tank, \$30.
13. Stock Commando air cleaner cases, \$10.
14. 750 Commando front fender, chromed with center bracket, \$10.
15. 750 Roadster swinging arm, \$25.
16. Hi-rider gas tank, \$35.
17. Fastback center stand, \$20.
18. Commando engine sprocket pullers, good and strong, made them myself, \$10.
19. Black leather motorcycle jacket, size 38, 40 inch chest, hardly worn, \$65.
20. 1964 650cc Triumph replica II Special completely rebuilt, new everything, cherry, \$1,500.
21. Triumph stock dual seat, recovered, \$50.

Phil Radford (408) 293-4548

FOR SALE:

1. A G15 and an Atlas, both for \$650. Not running, but both are titled, with an extra engine. 90-95% complete.
2. '75 MKIII Interstate. Black & silver, or will paint to suit, E-start works, has Sears Diehard, Lockhart oil cooler, rear-sets, 18" rear rim, QI headlamp, and Konis. \$1800/or offer.

Ken Hein (714) 638-8257

(Leave a message or call any night but Monday or Wednesday)

FOR SALE:

'74 850 Roadster with Windjammer fairing, Dunstall exhaust, and leather seat. 20,000 miles on bike, 2,100 miles on engine rebuild, exceptionally clean. \$1,200 or best offer.

Keith Ingle (408) 259-3530 (leave message with Lynne)

FOR SALE:

1. '71 Roadster tank, beautiful condition, Jaguar jade green, just painted and used only once, \$85.
2. '71 Roadster seat in excellent condition, \$25.
3. Well used Dunstall Decibal silencers, \$10 each.
4. '71 battery tray, oil tank and lines, original chrome shocks (?), cheap.

Bill Sanford (408) 942-3895, days  
(415) 261-2677, eves.

FOR SALE:

1. New concentric Amal 30 & 32mm carb bodies, \$45.90.
2. New throttle slides, 3 & 3 1/2 cut-away, \$12.50.

Herb Willis (408) 253-0602

FOR SALE:

'73 Combat Interstate with 17,000 miles, new paint (striping & decals correct), late model mufflers, Colorcraft cafe fairing, mechanical details, repair records, & spares. \$1900 or best offer.

Tom Kelly (916) 877-6450 weekends  
(415) 534-6383 weekdays until  
7 A.M.

FOR SALE:

1. Dual Mikuni set-up (used), \$75.
2. 940 kit, used, good condition, \$100.
3. '72 BSA 441, excellent, street/dirt, \$400.
4. '50 Norton ES2 (500cc), \$1800.
5. '75 MKIII, fair shape, runs well, \$900.

Bill Getty (213) 941-4440

FOR SALE:

Red '74 850 Fastback in perfect shape, with Boyer ignition and Amal MKII carbs. Included are many extra parts, original factory service notes, manuals, Belstaffs, Marsee bags, tools, etc. Serious offers of \$1,950 or so.

Gary Broeder (415) 949-2291

FOR SALE:

1950 ES2, genuine one owner machine from new, all parts are original including log book, tool kit, etc. The original owner would be pleased to confirm that it is a genuine machine. Totally refurbished and in immaculate condition.

E.W. Furnell home: Botley 5166  
31 Vicarage Lane work: Southampton 443122  
Cudridge,  
Southampton, Hants.  
England

**Norton Notice**

985 E. GRANT PLACE  
SAN MATEO, CA 94402

**FIRST CLASS**