



Northumbria Branch Newsletter

July 2009 (being the “Tappity John MID_SEASON newsletter”, by Tappity John, Northumbria)

The Story so Far:

Noted at Wooler: Starting procedure for the Mighty Non-Norton (the MNN)!

It is time to make known the starting procedure for these machines. Renowned for their rugged simplicity and reliability, these are the machines of choice for film stars who cross continents, deserts, jungles, taiga and wilderness – especially since the manufacturer provides them free. Witness “The long way down”, “The long way up”, “The long way backwards”, “Why can’t we do it crossways?”.



(Note secret signs used in conclaves of MNN owners)

- Equipment needed:**
- One Japanese bike with large capacity battery.
 - Jump leads (may be borrowed from passing camel caravans, continent-crossing Land Rovers, etc)
 - Tool kit.
 - One, preferably two assistants.

Procedure:

Remove rear portion of dual seat from the MNN

Remove forward portion of dual seat from the MNN, revealing tool tray

Remove tools and tool tray.

Using special tool (if in tool tray), unscrew fastening holding down rear portion of fuel tank. (If special tool not in tool tray, hitch a ride on a passing camel).

Lever up rear portion of tank, and look deep in the deep and dark recess underneath: you will just see a battery.

Connect jump leads between this battery and to the battery on the Japanese motorcycle. It may need an assistant to ensure that the connections made to the almost inaccessible battery on the MNN stay in place while you –

Start Japanese motorcycle.

Push starter on MNN which should fire up.

Now disconnect jump leads.

Adjust choke on MNN. Engine now stops.

Repeat procedure with different choke settings until MNN runs with jump leads removed.

Struggle to keep engine running while you re-assemble the MNN.

Ride off into the sunset.

Clearly great progress has taken place since the Tappity Norton was made 49 years ago, when the starting procedure involved a large lever thingy (with foot pedal) that sticks out in an upwards direction from the end of the gearbox. Starting procedure:

- Jump on large lever thingy.

Apart from which - Wooler was COOOLD! But – DRY!. So, those of us that braved the cold and survived the nights in our flea bags, enjoyed an excellent weekend. The Jim Fraser reception suite was more capacious than ever – with Tea, Coffee and endless pork pies on offer. The Saturday ride was somewhat erratic, what with the efforts to get the Mighty Non-Norton going, and divers groups losing the others and going in different directions. Your scribe ended up part of a splinter group that took in the ranges, and went on to Kelso, so as to savour the giant tea cakes that abound in that town.

Donnington:

On the way down, Clive Mark 2 pulled away from the petrol pumps, swerved wildly, just missed the plate glass window at the cash desk, then, pirouetting around and searching for the ground with his foot, he gracefully keeled over sideways. Cause – a broken clutch cable. Consequence: late arrival, the pub at the camp site refusing to feed us, no food at pubs in the village, but, finally we found an Indian restaurant. Clive continued to entertain us – half the Norton Owners at Donnington spent a happy Saturday in a “brain’s trust” on how to get his bike to start, in spite of a lever thingy having been provided on the end of the gearbox. Witness the gathered experts - - - - -



We had a good turnout – Jim Fraser, John Turnbull (Both left later for the Banbury Run), Clive2, yours truly, Simon Murray, Alan Millar, Tony Heron, and Brian Hutchinson who did not put his bike on display, thus giving others a chance.

Not all went well. Food was rare and expensive. The proposed tour of the new Norton factory was cancelled (Jim said that Scousers has been discovered among the Noccers, and there was fear of the factory being ransacked), and insurers pulled out at the last moment, cancelling the big parade.

But your scribe had a great time – including his first time let loose on a race track. The car that was supposed to control us seemed to get lost somewhere. After 3 steadily improving laps, as I worked my way forward from near the back, we should have left the track, and, indeed, bikes ahead were pulling off to the left, just in front! BUT!! There more going right on! Were these the old pre-war bangers a lap behind? Not a bit of it – a phalanx of café racers, and extra-mighty Commandos. I set off in pursuit, and more and more followed me! There is a descending section, with an “S” bend, followed by a right hander at the bottom. People ahead started to brake for the “S” bend. BUT!! If you position yourself correctly at the start, you can gun it right through the “S” , and then heave over to the left and really whizz round the following right hander! When the control car reappeared at the end of the illicit 4th lap, and forced us to leave the track, your tappity scribe was the 5th of the bad boys to finish. WONDERFUL! Like being born again!!



Your scribe in action. Slight fuzziness is caused by the extreme speed

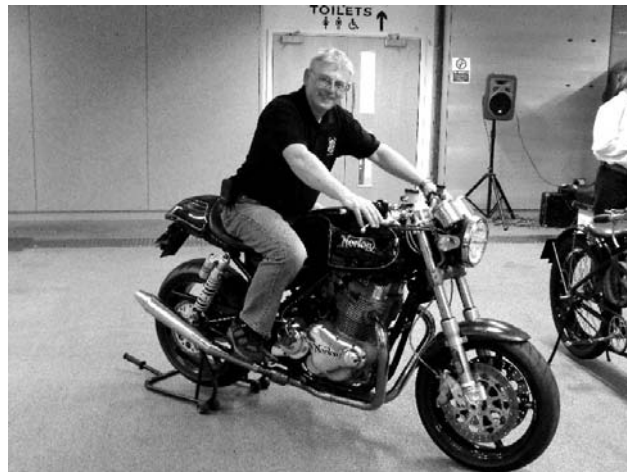


Clive 2 in action. – less fuzzy - - - - -

We were also given a display of the riding skills of the real racing men – but not told who was which. One was so skilful that he fell off at the first corner! (The following picture is for sale)



And, for those who paid for the expensive Saturday night meal, it was actually worth it. You would have paid as much in a restaurant, for something this good. Really superb food, plonk included, talks in between courses by various celebrities, and a presentation of the new Norton – at least 4 Northumbrians were the last to leave, at 2 a.m. Dave can be proud of our Wardling skills. We can get Wardled by ourselves now! He has trained us well!



The new Norton. A snip at £16000

The Ugthorpe Hall Camping weekend

Weather: appalling: visibility 10 yds . Turnout: actually 6 – not at all bad, given the weather. Dave’s brother, Derek, came by car: his bike would not start, so they all went off in the rain, by car, to see steam trains at Goathland, and had a great day – which terminated with great VOCAL WARDLINGS (this unique sound is called Karaoke!). Thanks be to God that he has given us ear plugs! Also Dave is dead chuffed because he managed to negotiate a >50% reduction in the camping fees. (The weather?).

Remaining Branch Events are :

DO NOT FORGET CONISTON: Dave will be there from the Thursday and would welcome company for touring around the Lakes. Note: The old Torver site is now changed to the Coniston Hall Campsite. Approx 1 miles S. of Coniston town, opposite a church is a turning down to the hall. Dates will be **Thurs.** 23rd to 26th July to correspond with the Great Cumbria Steam Rally on the Sat. Contact Dave Wardle.

Late Aug at the IOM, and by popular request, Northumbria NOC will be official “greeters” at the Manx Reunion, at the Shore Hotel, Laxey. **IMPORTANT:** The date is Tuesday after bank holiday Monday (which I make 1st Sept), **not as announced in “Roadholder”**. A group from Northumbria will be riding over. Talk to Dave Wardle. (Dave says racing days are Aug 31, and 2nd and 4th of Sept).

The Middleton-in-Teesdale camp: campsite on southern edge of the town, just across the river. 18th-20th Sept. If you hear reports that the village is running low on pubs, don't panic, because there is a bar at the campsite, usually with bar meals. Your contact is, again, Dave Wardle.

Kamtrek Treasure Hunt – Sun 27th Sept. This time of year worked well last year, with no clashes with other events, and good weather. Organiser is Clive Taylor mark 2, who retires in July and will have more time for really important things. Details will be posted nearer the time. Mark this well in your diary! It is a really great day out – and the organiser will have put in a great deal of effort in preparing it.

Mental Rambling 1: What happened to Midweek evening rides? What's this got to do with data protection?:

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that the idea has been put forward with enthusiasm (by Alan Millar that mid-week evening runs would be a **good idea**. (we did some once). The best time to decide to go out on an evening run is when we know the weather is good. So it's short notice. He proposed texting interested parties by mobiles. Dave was going to collect (top secret, data protected) mobile numbers for those who were interested. To make this work we need somebody to be seriously interested.

Mental Rambling 2: Tyne Valley Classic Bike Club Show (Sun 2nd Aug)

At our AGM it was decided that we would not put up a stand at this gathering, unlike last year, since the venue had moved to a restricted site at the Robin Hood pub on the Military Road. However, at the time, there was word of a possible move back to Stamfordham village green. Checking the Tyne Valley club's web site, the event remains at the Robin Hood. So – no Northumbria stand, but Robin Watson of the Tyne Valley club says we are most welcome at what is the, now smaller, successor to the Corbridge shows. I imagine the pub will be providing food and drink as well. See you there?

Mental Rambling 3 : The Begonia Rally (www.nortonclubflanders.be) – next year??

What about the Flanders Branch's annual Begonia Rally? We ran into this lot of active Nortoneers at Donnington. OK you have to pay for the ferry, but the charges at the camp are really economical, especially compared to Donnington. The North Shields-"Amsterdam" (Ijmiuden) ferry regards you as prisoners to be pillaged, but, if things have not changed, the Hull-Zeebrugge boat is more reasonable once on board, and lands you close to your destination. Which means it could be done in a long weekend. This year's ferry costs are around £150 **each** (4 people, 4 bikes, one cabin – peak period of course). A shared 2-man cabin costs a bit more. Evening meal and breakfast £22.45 each way. . Dates clash with I.O.M but not all of us go there. And (Jim, are you paying attention?), there is reputed to be a huge Belgian Beer Tasting! This year's rally, as an example, is at Staden-Vijfwegen, (Flanders battlefields area). 28-30 Aug. Once you have arrived, costs are:

Rally fee – 20 euro	Friday evening dinner – 7.5 euro
Saturday buffet and barbecue - 12.5 Euro	Breakfast - 4 Euro

Someone else's mental rambling: Starting times for club nights:

Simon and Alan, who both work, unlike your scribe, said, while we imbibed together at Donnington, that a late start means a late finish. Bad for the workers. They also wonder if an earlier start would encourage some members to come from further afield. On the other hand I have heard comments from a few who, having arrived at the official 8.30 start, found nobody there – the rest arriving at about 9 p.m. Could it be that more would arrive at 8.30 if they thought there would actually be anyone there? Vicious circle? If so, might a **real** 8.30 start solve the problem? (But, looking in Roadholder, it is true that most branches seem to start at 8.30). Dave also says that if anyone wants to come in a bit earlier, give him a bell – he's happy to join you.

Further discussion at club nights? – or for the AGM? - as for your scribe, he's retired, and has no views on this particular subject.

**That's it for now! Your tappity scribe is off to the Austrian rally with Bob and Clive2.
Anyone else going?**

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