



Northumbria Branch Late Jan '19 Newsletter

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!

The Annual General Meeting strikes again!!!

Combined with feb club night for conviviality, its 7.30 on the 28th of Feb (Thurs).
Simon's agenda is on the last page.

As before, if you are good and turn up, you qualify for a free sandwich!

But beware! – because your scribe suspects that the really big item on the agenda will be the rally of the Big Norton Club in the Sky (BNCITS) which we are doing late July. Hordes of volunteers may be needed. (This is the rally for which your scribe is **not** responsible because his wife said she would divorce him if he ran another rally)

Tribute to Frank Dodds:



Not all of us will have known Frank. But he was one of our longest serving members. As a man with a huge range of motorcycling activities (and others) we probably got our fair share of his time. My own impression of Frank was

that he was “solid”, the kind of man who you could rely on and count on, and who knew what he was talking about. News of his death arrived shortly before Christmas.

Well, if you are going to do it, sudden heart failure is no bad way to go – but at the age of 60, that’s just too soon. Gwen, magnificently calm, said it was “inheritance”. And, if you have to go, what better tribute than a massive processional ride of what must have been over 30 motorcycles, following the hearse, not just from the meeting point to the crematorium, but through the centre of Darlington, through the small lanes in the oldest part of town, the shopping area, around the covered market, the big tower, with marshals in brilliant “High-viz” stopping the traffic at intersections and roundabouts. Respect!! How they got permission, is a wonder, what with the Xmas shopping and all, but it was most professionally managed.

Well, the marshals were because Frank was a Marshall – in fact “Marshalled” on many race tracks both North and South of the border, and it was from his racing groups that so many of the bikes in the procession had arrived.

We know Frank mostly due to the Norton connection, but he was also an RAF engineer for decades, much travelled, and a man of many (and somewhat surprising) interests. Most amusing, to your scribe, was to hear how, when his Gwen got a sewing machine, he had to pull it apart to give it a service, and then, to learn how it worked and how things were done, he had to find out how to do some sewing too. Following which, realising her sewing group had many sewing machines to service (or fettle), he joined up. Sewing machines and lots of ladies!

Well, we can only live forwards. If the way Gwen organised Frank’s funeral is anything to go by, that’s doing it.

So lets drink a toast to Frank next time we meet.

But Gwen has a part-completed Navigator project of Frank’s, which she will not be able to complete, so at some point it will be for sale. Maybe we have some “Renowned Expert” on lightweights who would like to have a go.

The bits Frank got done are perfection. Frame powder coated. Oil tank, tool box and fuel tank in a lovely metallic blue. Wheels pristine – see pic (the pic. did not come out all that well. – you cannot see the new tyres, but you can see the twinkle). But the engine has not been looked at, and until someone has taken it apart and explored its insides, it is hard to tell its condition.



Anyhow Gwen has to collect all the bits from nooks and crannies where Frank left them, and she’s off to family in Northern Ireland for a while. No doubt we’ll hear when she’s gathered the bits. But if someone started thinking about it, that’s one less thing for her to worry about. Maybe we should drink to Gwen too.

Don Richards is back in action:

How is this for an excuse for a project?? Don’s beautiful example of the relatively rare model 77, and the winner of prizes, is being sold. Don claims he has a poorly ankle and cannot kick it over. When building the bike Don insisted on anything to make it go faster, including a sporty camshaft and extra high compression. At which point kicking it over may have given even Goliath a sore ankle.

So now Don is building a Commandator (Or Dominando), complete with electric start, for the poorly ankle. (If he builds in too much compression, along with the fancy camshaft, he’ll give even the electric starter a poorly ankle). The project is well under way, and the results so far look incredibly handsome.

Apart from the electric start, the bike is going to feature twin disc brakes at the front, and (and this could really hold things up), all sorts of electronic instruments and displays, which are completely beyond your scribe’s powers of understanding. (Your scribe’s ignition system remains a trained mouse, which knocks two flints together one quarter

of an inch before T D C). Anyhow, your scribe is concerned that Don's electronic exotica could seriously delay a project which looks pretty close to completion. And which he's targeting to have ready from our big BNCITS rally.

A snag has been with the engine plates for the tilted engine. Beefy plates were acquired from Norvil, but of thick aluminium. But, as anyone who has put an engine into a slimline Dommi frame will know, the front plates fit inside the frame lugs at the bottom, between the lugs and the engine, and outside them at the top. The aluminium was just too fat. Option one was to remove one of the frame lugs (Don says the wide line frames have one lug less), but option 2 was some chromed steel plates (where did he get THESE?) which fit the standard Dommi engine, and which, with the boring of extra holes in the right places, have done the job. A new challenge is how to attach the centre stand spring on the "tippity" frame-plates. In fact Norvil have given Don some real assistance on this job. It appears the conversions they are familiar with, and which they do, use wideline frames. And there are differences.

The other jobs, apart from wiring, are a survey and maybe some restoration of the gearbox, and renovating the cush rubbers (inside the rear sprocket on the Commando), and putting the whole thing together.

So here's the project bike as she stands today.



And here's an amazingly anal retentive piece of perfectionism – a brass bush on the centre stand pivot.



Officers - - -

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Norton Owners' Club – Northumbria Branch
2019 Annual General Meeting – Agenda

Venue: The Melton Constable

Date: 28th February, 2019, &.30 p.m.

1. **Chairman's Welcome/Apologies for Absence**
2. **Minutes of previous meeting & any matters arising from minutes**
3. **Branch Officials Annual Reports**
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
4. **Election of 2019/20 Branch Officials/Committee Members**
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Newsletter Scribe
5. **Branch Subscriptions**
6. **Venue for branch meetings**
7. **Branch and associated events**
 - a. Clive Taylor Run – 12th May.
 - b. Branch camping weekend – 7th to 9th June
 - c. Aln Valley Railway Vintage and Classic Vehicle Show -15th/16th June. For information.
 - d. Jimmie Guthrie Memorial Run – 16th June. For information.
 - e. NOC 2019 International Rally, The Netherlands – 20th to 24th June. Some branch members are intending to attend. If you have an interest, and considering how relatively close to the Newcastle/Amsterdam ferry, please let Bob know.
 - f. NOC National Rally, Morpeth – 26 to 28th July.
 - g. Tyne Valley Classic Show at Stamfordham – 4th August. The organisers have welcomed us as participants and we will display at the show.
 - h. The Glendale Show – 25th August. For information.
 - i. Norton Motorcycles 'burnout' – 31st August to 1st September. For information.
 - j. *Yetholm camping weekend – 6th to 8th September. To be confirmed.*
 - k. *29th September. (John Powell organising, poor sod).*
 - l. NOC National Under Cover Rally, St. Audries Bay, Somerset – 27th to 29th September.
 - m. Northumbria NOC Christmas Dinner – 18th December. (Note: this is a Wednesday as an alternative for members who cannot attend meetings on a Thursday).
8. **NOC National Rally, Morpeth – 26 to 28th July. Overview and preparations**
 - a. The name of the rally is the Rampart Rally and will be held at the Morpeth Rugby Club.
 - b. Friday evening being mainly a meet and greet time, plus entertainment consisting of a demonstration of the Northumbrian pipes and a presentation by John Powell.
 - c. On Saturday morning, there will be runs organised, with one being arranged especially for smaller bikes. On Saturday evening, there will be a band.
 - d. On Sunday, we have organised a visit to the Aln Valley Railway.
 - e. Assistance
9. **Rideouts**
10. **Guest speakers**
11. **Any other business**