



Northumbria Branch Newsletter, February, 2022 Horrible warning

Simon has already sent an email, warning of an AGM on 24th Feb at the Melton Constable, Seaton Sluice, at 7.30. You will be bribed with free sandwiches to get you to attend.

The agenda is at the end of this newsletter. (I always used to send this agenda out by snail mail before all the e-mailing, and I know virtually all of you will have it now by email, but even so I am sending it because I cannot cure myself of the habit.)

And – passing thoughts – (scribe’s ramble)

It is not fit for an ex-branch sec to air opinions regarding matters for which the current branch sec. is responsible. So I am not forwarding opinions, but rather musing on questions. Because things change over the years, and not the least, we have become more “far-flung”. “Hon. Members” in Aberdeen are joined by new members in Cumbria, and clearly we need to ensure our activities also provide for them. And the membership has increased greatly as well.

And then there is communication. First, there were newsletters and notices by mail. Then there was setting up the web site, which is found within the NOC main club site. Bob and I put in a lot of work getting us set up (mainly Bob), and then the main club changed the web site provider so it had to be set up all over again. Apart from taking pics of bikes, it contains a calendar of events and provided a forum for communications. And newsletters - - - BUT-----

Along comes a hugely increased use of email for communication, and of course there is text messaging.

And then, for a while we had a club Facebook site. But that ended when John Pye, who did the club site, set up his own. Some people do not like Facebook anyhow, but while it was there, it seemed to work.

Now Whatsap appears, which seems particularly popular these days.

We cannot run ALL of them, and, what about the original web site? If not looked at why have it? But compared to the others it is permanent, (also this means someone has to keep it up to date). But being permanent, what goes in stays forever – which is why I always copy newsletters into it – an increasing record of club activity. And, because it is a site found on the web, some new members have found us via the web site. Does anything else do this?

Which does not mean I am after new life for a dead web site – but there are conflicting issues re. what is actually popular, - what makes us easy to find? - what is easy to operate? - and where do we store our history? So this is not an opinion, just trying to help define the question. Simon can probably add more.

I cannot win with Richard, the all-fetfling engineer.

In the last publication, for some reason my errant brain wrote that Richard rode a Bantam in trials. Realising this would turn him white with rage, I e-mailed a correction – that it was a Cub. Well it appears I was wrong both ways. Witness:-

Richard's email re Bantam/Cub

Hi John! I don't know where or when this scurrilous assertion was made and I am indeed upset by this assault on my manliness / ego! However, I think I can overlook it this one time as I can find some mitigation for your slanderous assertions, in that my Tiger Cub is actually a "Bantam Cub" and marketed as such and indeed has a Bantam D10 frame into which the top-brass at BSA / Triumph dropped a real Tiger Cub engine! These were made at the Smallheath works between 1966 and 1969 and I believe they only sold about 1500 of them, even though they were actually listed at a ridiculously cheap £175. I suppose that by 1968~1969 most "kids" would have far preferred a RD200 Yamaha or Suzuki Invader, even if they were considerably dearer! Too little to late, again!

Probably, BSA -Triumph were too busy in 1968 putting the finishing touches to the styling of the Rocket-Three and Trident, that you so admire, to actually consider what the "kids" wanted and what the Japs were supplying! Same with the R3, although the styling was actually well received in the UK at the time and considered "futuristic". But, in the "States" it went down like a lead-balloon! They wanted "pea-nut" tanks and traditional "mufflers" etc. In fact, as I may have mentioned during your rapturous critique of my R3 during the summer, BSA were forced to make up "beauty kits" to re-style the bikes to American tastes! As you will see from the attached image, the bikes were terrifically enhanced at little cost! I trust you will immediately print out a copy of this image in poster size to adorn your workshop wall! Regards, Richard. P.S. I dare you to put this in the newsletter! R.

- OK, Richard, oh, and by the way, I am NOT an American and would not be seen dead on a Harley.----- here's your pic ----- scribe



George Young: A learned discourse on wet sumping, entitled, in his words: "Preventing wet sumping on commando and dominator"

Fed up with draining the sumps on both my dominator 88 and commando roadster prior to riding them, I decided to fit a non-return valve in the outlet from their oil tanks.

After searching forums and websites and rejecting the manual valve versions, with or without electrical interlock, I decided to go for the one supplied by Holland Norton Works, not cheap but very well engineered.

Fitting to the commando was straight forward, a direct replacement for the existing oil tank outlet.

I decided to alter the outlet pipe from the banjo for the dominator to both reduce the length and route of pipe between the oil tank inlet connection on the crankcase.



Both have been fitted for 3 years now and worked perfectly, one thing you must do at every oil change is to prime the pipe between the valve outlet and pump inlet.

I know at least another 2 members of our club branch who have fitted these and are happy with them.



(How George can want to ride a Commando, when he has a Dommi 88 is a mystery to me- scribe)

And here, in his deathless prose, is one of our other Simons, Simon Hadden (= Bald Simon 2)

In May 2022, I acquired a tidy, but mechanically tired, 1953 ES2. Initially I'd hoped to have it on the road by July, but it turned out to be the "gift that keeps on giving". Indeed, it gave no end of surprises.

Eventually, the list of unexpected findings contained around 100 items to be sorted out and it took until December to risk a proper test run. Up to that point, the bike had only managed a handful of runs up the street.

By January, it was civilised enough to be taken on a run with another Norton single – a back-to-back comparison with Clive Taylor's 1957 19S. We took turns riding each bike and covered over about 20 miles along muddy lanes, north-west of Morpeth. This exciting episode culminated with a 60mph blast up the A697, back to Longhorsley.

The photo shows both bikes before the run, whilst they were still clean. *(19S on the left and ES2 on the right.)*

Though the ES2's engine is 500cc compared to that of the 19S which is 600cc, the performance didn't seem vastly different. Both machines will spin along at 60mph without much effort, though 50mph seems less frantic. On the back roads, both were sure-footed.

Interestingly, I found both Nortons more relaxing than my modern Yamaha 700cc twin on these mud-strewn lanes. I guess this is because the Nortons are both lighter and their seats are around 1.5" lower. The ES2 weighs 392lbs compared to the Yamaha at 432lbs.



(Scribe-rant) Since I started out with a horrible warning about the AGM, here's another horrible warning: Avon Roadrider Mark 2 tyres. Fitting of –

I have had quite a few Roadrider (not Mark 2) tyres, and had no trouble fitting them, including by the roadside with punctures. Then - Front tyre looks a bit worn. But now you get **Mark 2** Roadriders. Which look like mark 1. Except –

Major 3 hour battle to fit the tyre including huge expenditures of strength and liberal application of any lubricant I could think of. Finally the tyre is fit – and inflate – and I have punctured the inner.

1 Hour battle, and I manage to get the inner out. With back injury. Stagger around for a couple of days. More or less recover.

Also order 2 more inner tubes from National Bike Tyres, our Co Durham supplier – Steve Taylor. Tubes do not arrive. Contact Steve Taylor, who checks with the delivery Co, who say they were delivered and signed for by someone called John. (I never sign as John for deliveries). Finally it appears they are in carrier's warehouse after all, but all Steve's attempts cannot get them to deliver. So he sends 2 more. Fortunately I also have a spare of my own anyhow, and, my back having recovered, repeat the hours long battle, and finally inflate –and you guess – another holed inner tube. (I have never punctured an inner tube until now). Start at 10 am, and by lunch time I have managed to get both sides of the tyre off the wheel, to have a hard look. Lubricate and check everything, and by about 3 pm I have fought one side onto the rim.

Stop and think. Ring Steve Taylor. I will bring him the wheel and tyre. Yes, he can fit it but more than that, I need to find a way to get these tyres on and off if I have a puncture in, e.g. Outer Beluchistan (while hiding from the Taliban).

Then the 2 lost deliveries appear at the door.

Go to Steve Taylor. Offer him the lost delivery tubes, but he says I can have them as a present. Then he uses lots of lube and some special mighty levers, instead of his “wheel” device. Success.

On his suggestion I have bought mighty levers like he used, called “pro-works Michelin Pattern”. £10 each, no less. I need a puncture to test them. But I must applaud Steve for his support.

Talking to Richard Johnston, the mighty fettling engineer, he has also had trouble with “Mark 2” Be warned. (Note: wheel rims are original)



Mighty lever and original

Fit over tool tray



And tied down and the seat fits

AND – we did have the Christmas “Bash”

It was near the height of the “Next variant” attack – and Simon got a lot of cancellations. Nevertheless, a goodly number of the brave/foolhardy gathered in a special room/sealed container for a very happy gathering.

Just how brave/foolhardy we were compared to the public at large was driven home if you left the special room/sealed container, to go into the main pub for a drink or loo visit - - - to find it empty except for one non-Norton brave/foolhardy person propping up the bar and NOBODY ELSE!

Your scribe has not done a stock take to see how many of us have died since of horrible infections, but here are some pics our branch sec made of brave/foolhardy people.

(P.S. generally food was good and service friendly if a little confused about our orders due to all the changes in attendance. Only, if we go again, avoid the venison (=antelope) and Crumble.)



Triumphant musings:

In December, Simon forwarded info on Derek Turnbull's Triumph T100T 1969, which is for sale, and on which Derek has lavished masses of work and many shekels of gold. I am not repeating his offer here, but you will have Simon's e-mail, of 16.12.21. But I got curious about this machine and started looking up info on this type. That is especially because I also ride a 500 cc machine, as is Derek's, but mine is a "standard" slimline Dommi. The Dommi officially produces 30 bhp. The Triumph, depending where you look it up, produces just under, or just over 40 bhp. The nearest Norton competitor is the 500SS (a fairly rare beast), rated at 36. But my "standard" has peak BHP at 6000 rpm, while the Triumph is at 7000. I never ride at anything near 6000 rpm anyhow (maybe briefly up to about 4800 when passing a row of lorries?), but does that make the Triumph "bizzly"? And I also notice that this Triumph appears to have a frame with a single down tube, against the Dommi's featherbed. It would be interesting to compare handling and performance.

(P.S. more info on the bike in Simon's email)

Officers - - -

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Norton Owners' Club – Northumbria Branch

2022 Annual General Meeting, 24th February at the Melton Constable – Agenda

1. Chairman's Welcome
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Minutes of previous meeting & any matters arising from minutes
4. Branch Officials Annual Reports
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
5. Election of 2022/23 Branch Officials/Committee Members
 - a. Chairman
 - b. Secretary
 - c. Treasurer
 - d. Newsletter Scribe

Please advise the Secretary of any nominations!
6. Branch Subscriptions
 - a. Annual fee/Joint membership fees
 - b. Bank transfer is now the preferred method (Please use your name for the reference).
Name: Norton Owners Club Northumbria Branch
Sort Code: 30-93-55
Account Number: 01241950
7. Norton Owners Club website – Branch section – seems little used – feedback?
 - a. Email seems to work well. Other options for keeping in contact?
 - b. WhatsApp rideout group?
8. Venue for branch meetings – to be discussed
 - a. Melton Constable
 - b. Other suggested venues? Jubilee (Fawdon), Three Horseshoes (Blyth), Ridley Arms (Stannington), Three Tuns (Heddon on the Wall) – other alternatives?
 - c. Alternate meeting venues to cater for spread of members?
9. New members from the west:
 - a. We have had two volunteers to assist: Martin Chadwick & Eddie Stephenson
 - b. How to include in events. Ideas?
10. Branch and associated events
 - a. Branch camping weekend – Wooler 24th to 26th June (fixed due to limited campsite availability).
 - b. Yetholm – Joint branch event, organised by Tay Valley (David Templeton).
 - c. Keswick, Fisherground Farm or Moffat?
 - d. Kamtrek
 - e. Northumbria NOC Christmas Dinner – 15th or 22nd Dec?
 - f. Please let the Secretary know of any events that members might be interested in throughout the year and they will be circulated – e.g. The Bamburgh Run, Aln Valley Railway events, etc.
11. Rideouts
 - a. Consider a dedicated rideout organiser (or team).
 - b. Is it best to schedule dates throughout the riding season and then only cancel if bad weather or on an 'ad hoc' basis? For example, 2nd Wednesday/month & 3rd Sunday/month
 - c. Been hard to organise in 2021 considering covid restrictions, the weather and poor attendance.
 - d. What length of rideouts suits members?
12. Zoom calls – continue with them in winter months? October to March? Second Thursday of the month?
13. Any other business
 - a. Presentations/Guest Speakers
 - b. Any interest from the branch in holding National Rallies?
 - c. Monthly coffee mornings?
 - d. Any interest in attending a GNAA 'Bike Night' at Eaglecliffe (Dates TBC)

