



Northumbria Branch Newsletter

Issued January 2011 by Tappity John, Northumbria Scribe and friend of the Venemous Bede)

ANNOUNCING AN *EARLIER* ANNUAL AND ASTONISHINGLY GENERAL MEETING

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez! Hear the following announcement from our secretary, Clive Taylor Mark Two:

The Branch AGM will take place at 8.00pm at the Melton Constable Hotel, Seaton Sluice, on Monday 28th February 2011. This is a few weeks earlier than usual in order that an annual Branch report, which is to include a copy of the minutes of the last AGM, can be sent to the NOC Executive Committee Branch Liaison Officer by 15th March. Food will be provided as usual.

Nominations are invited for the Branch positions of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Newsletter Editor. All nominations should be submitted to the Branch Secretary, Clive Taylor, either by email or phone (cetaylor@hotmail.co.uk 0191 266 6088) by Friday 25th February. In the event of a nomination being received a ballot will be held at the AGM.

A “My First Norton” article?

This came in from Clive Taylor Mark one. He tells me his combination is now fully rejuvenated and back on the road. As to whether this is his “first Norton”, well, either he is much older than he looks or he must have ordered this bike while still in his pram. (Article shared with the Amazingly Advanced Motorcyclists of Northumberland).



Norton 19S and Watsonian Avon Sidecar

Gosh, it was a bit cold on the morning I picked up my new bike. I bought it from the Norton dealer, Taylor Matherson at Bedford Hill Balham London. It was 5th February 1957 and if Prime Minister Anthony Eden hasn't put up purchase tax the bike will cost me £254 9 shillings and 10 pence.

It should be a good family motorcycle combination. Plenty of room for me and my wife on the bike and the little one plus holiday luggage in the sidecar.

I decided on the Norton 19S for several reasons. It's a good solid well proven bike from a well established manufacturer who's been around for a long time. The Watsonian Avon single seat sports sidecar is reasonably light and handles well.

The bike is powered by a typical Norton, overhead valve single cylinder 600cc engine. Single row chain primary drive to a wet Norton clutch driving through an AMC (Associated Motor Cycles) four speed gearbox. The frame is steel tube with brazed, forged lugs to hold it together. The excellent Norton, Long Roadholder front forks are fitted and a swinging arm rear fork with Girling dampers.

A chronometric speedometer sits in the headlamp shell alongside an ammeter. Ignition is by a 6 volt Lucas magneto and charging for the lights is via a Lucas (Prince of Darkness) Dynamo.

I had checked the specification and been impressed. 25 bhp at 4200rpm when run in. Torque is not quoted by the factory but I would guess about a million lb ft. Compression ratio 6.4:1, Bore & stroke is 82mm x 113mm.

Top speed with the Avon sidecar fitted is about 65-70 mph with intermediate speeds of 32 in first, 48 in second and 60 in third.

What's it like to ride then.? Well it's an easy starter. No ignition switch or key is fitted to this bike so just switch on the fuel tap. Close the air lever; retard the ignition about a quarter, lean on the kick starter to bring the engine up to compression. Pull in the exhaust valve lifter; ease the engine over top dead centre, let go of the lifter and one heave should do the trick. Retarding the ignition fully will provide a tick over speed of about 400 rpm.

With the engine running we are ready to go. The clutch action is pretty heavy but engaging first gear is almost silent. A few revs and were off. Changing up the box is very good. The Norton AMC gearbox is a delight and although the lever movement is long the shift is sweet with no false neutrals. This bike is fitted with sidecar gear ratios so we are soon spinning along in top at 40 or 50.

Setting up the sidecar geometry properly has a significant effect on how the bike tracks along the road. Get it wrong and it's virtually impossible to steer. This one's fine, about ¾" toe in, 1" of bike lean out and about 6" sidecar wheel lead. This allows you to turn right without too much effort and turn left by running round the sidecar wheel.

Performance is pretty good with my wife in the sidecar and a boot full of luggage. Give and take motoring and cruising at about 50 returns about 50 mpg. Dropping the speed to 40 gives about 60 mpg. Oil consumption is virtually nil. To carry the extra weight requires the rear preload adjustment on the Norton to be set at maximum. There is no adjustment on the front fork but it is fitted with heavy duty sidecar springs.

The sidecar body is sprung on two leaf springs at the back and the sidecar wheel on the Watsonian VG21 chassis pivots backwards and forwards on a silentblock bush. It's very comfortable with a dashboard cubby hole for nick knacks and an enclosed boot for luggage. There's a useful rack on the boot lid for a picnic hamper.

All three wheels are shod with Avon Triple Duty side car tyres and wear very well.

Get it into top and the bike takes hills in its stride. The long stroke engine, huge flywheels weighing a stone and low compression ensures steady progress up all but the steepest hills especially if you retard the ignition a tad.

The brakes on the bike are very good with a full width cast alloy 8" drum at the front and rod operated drum at the back. Both wheels are quickly detachable. There is no brake on the sidecar wheel so you must compensate for swing when applying the brakes hard. Braking from 30mph is about 50 feet.

Generally the engine is mechanically quiet but the exhaust can give a bit of a bark especially with the ignition retarded.

To sum up, the outfit is straight forward and robust in construction and it provides a reliable and rugged performance for a passenger load of up to 3 adults and their luggage.

Has anyone else a "First Norton Story" he would like to share?

Incoming message from Derek Turnbull:

Hello John,

Surprise, surprise, yes I am still alive.

I've been reading your emails and newsletters with interest - from the 4 quarters of the globe. About a year ago I accepted a global position in the organisation, hence my non attendance at club nights or mid week runs. Sad to say the Commando has been laid up for quite some time now under the SORN scheme (So Often Required Not).

As ever with 'Boys and Toys' I've decided to cheer myself up by ordering a new machine, a triumph Sprint GT (sorry!), which I hope to collect next week. Hopefully, I'll find the time to put some miles on it.

Yes, I'd love a calendar to remind me what a Norton looks like. Count me in. Please let me know who to send the cheque to.

Can you please change my email address on your system to derekturbull19@googlemail.com

Best Regards & many thanks
Derek

A note on Inner tubes, and punctures.

The last 2 years have brought me an outbreak of punctures. Many of you may know what follows already, but it was news to me. Because one cause of punctures has been rust spots in what are, all in all, still quite good rims. No, not major rust, but a little rust “bubble”, “eruption” or “excrescence” can grow under the inner tube, and then fret through. I went shopping for a new inner tube and spare. Hunters only had one the right size. I then discovered significant differences in inner tube prices between the previous fitted tubes from Hunters, and those sold by M&S. But, also, I noticed that the rubber in M&S’s tube appeared to be a lot thicker. The latter was “Continental”. “Hooray!”, I thought, “German quality.” Then I saw, “Made in India”. Well, maybe the Germans apply good incoming quality control. But as regards thickness of rubber, I suppose you get what you pay for. The old bike place opposite also had more expensive tubes. Labelled “Made in Thailand”. But, again, the rubber was thicker. However tubes are not all and I am addressing the state of the rims at the moment.

Another restoration under way?

Don Richards has everything he needs to get started on a new project following his re-creation of his Model 7. However he has so many different bits of engine that he could create any one of three different motorcycles, and he cannot decide which.

AGM of the Big Norton Club In The Sky

The Big Norton Club in the Sky (alias the “Main Club”) is holding its celestial annual AGM in York this year. The date is April the 3rd, a Sunday. This is as far North as they come. And they do not come this far North that often! I know that some of the present “Ossifers” of the branch (Sec., Chairman etc), plan to attend, riding down, unless there is a bizzard. Would you like to join in? Liaise at a club night?

Apology to Racing Richard:

In the last newsletter I passed on an opinion I heard that Richard’s crash at East Fortune may have been caused by a broken fork yoke. Richard says this is not possible: during other work he was carrying out recently he had had the yokes crack tested.

However it is pleasant to report that his arm is now out of concrete. Fingers not yet wiggling as well as they used to, but with time and exercise, hopefully that will come right.

About those articles in “Roadholder”

Well, As for the pre-Christmas club night – it was wonderful! Dave wearing a “T” shirt which said something like “Senior Member of the Grippers’ and Whingers’ Association”. Jim, who brought me as a peace offering, a DIY distributor repair kit, resplendent in Christmas tinsel wrapped around a vast hammer, huge cold chisel, 180 degree timing disc, massive steel drift, plus distributor. Then Stuart, with a “Bodged” camshaft, (great lumps of weld metal where the cam lobes had been), and who sported a specially made hat bearing the logo: “Norton Northumbria Bodgers”, and whose parting shot was “Bodgeamus Igitur”. And friendly faces all round.

What a wonderful group of people! Thank you! I am humbled.

Here’s a pictured demonstrating the correct application of “Inspired Improvisation” to a distributor, using the tools so kindly lent by Jim Fraser. (Use of Yuletide Hammer and drift). (I have vowed now to forego further use of the “B-word”)



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