



Dear Andover Norton Customer,

Summer is very much upon us and we saw weeks without a drop of rain with unprecedented temperatures.

Whilst dry weather is normally the dream of every motorcyclist, the temperatures this year often dimmed my desire to do a longer tour on one of my Nortons.

Furthermore the team is currently busy on several fronts, some of which we cannot disclose just yet, others either re-introduction of parts that haven't been available for a long time with the most complicated and costly one being a part that hasn't been made since the early 1970s. Watch this space!

### **Ashley on pre-Commando Norton clutches**

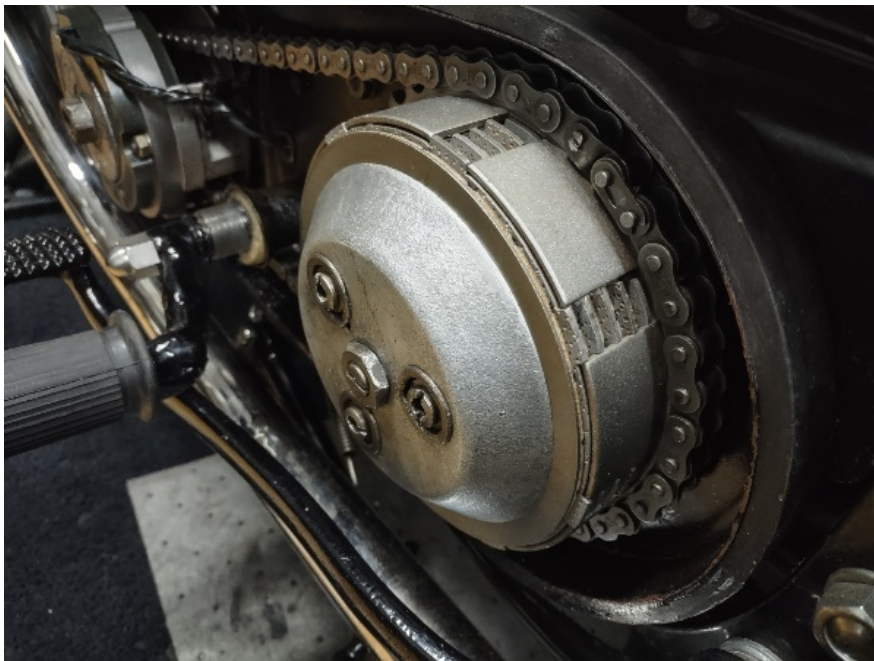
In recent weeks we have been getting a large volume of calls about parts for Dominator / N15 / P11 clutches. Most of these calls are coming from repair providers and the occasional owner and clearly they do not have a parts book for the model and year they are dealing with.

The Dominator / Heavy weight clutch varied massively over the years the Norton twin was available and much of it can be interchanged with earlier and later years, especially so the post '57 bikes. This leads to most owners not having the original clutch or correct replacement parts for that model year. Typical is an owner wanting friction plates for his 1964 N15, asking what was currently fitted I was surprised to be told 11 aluminium plain plates, another after being sent the PDF with photos of the clutch plates then purchases friction plates and then rings us to let us know that they are wrong, they need the friction plates with internal dogs.

We were even sent photos of clutch where the back plate had been welded to the spring stud nuts and ground them flush, and another who said our spider was not correct as it was not welded like the one he had. These are the worst cases, but many have plates various fitted when seem to do the job in the past it seems. Occasionally we also get "just send me the plates for that model year" then a few days later the phone rings, they are not correct as they over / under fill my clutch basket, clearly a different basket has been fitted.



Ideally, we need to know how thick the plates are, dogs inside or outside and how many plates, this will help identify what is needed, without that we would only have the parts book to use, which in most cases parts supplied from the parts book are rarely like anything that is fitted to the customers bike.



### **Fairy Tales in the Classic Press**

When Big Frank Westworth came to our Open Day, I complimented him on a piece I had read where he describes how he restored a bike with the help of friends, rode it for a while, sold it on, and years later heard that the man he sold it to claimed he had restored that very bike from a box of bits.

Today I read in a German classic bike mag, to my great surprise, that a mechanic I had parted ways with after he managed to make our racer slower than a production F1, claims that he played a leading role in getting the F1 Sports through the EU emissions approval. His claim astonished me somewhat given he departed over a year before the first F1 Sports prototype was even built. And dare I mention my

memories of what it took to get the beast clean enough to pass the test on the TÜV's rolling road.

On an aside, the article also claims over 1600 Norton rotaries were produced. Yet another fact I was as ignorant of as was Richard Negus who once counted all rotaries and came to just over 1000 including works racers and prototypes. But then what do we know?

So whatever you hear or read, be wary and question the competence of writer and sources.

### **The Emissions-free Norton**

Busy as we are, our R&D Department beat many others to the emission-free Norton and that without asking for any money from the taxpayer or loans from the bank. The more attentive visitors of our Open Day have watched a member of the owner's family testing the bike in the car park. It is a bit smaller than a Commando but that is solely to keep raw materials used in its build to a minimum and thus make production environment-friendly:



*The future for Norton: Our emissions-free, environmentally-friendly prototype*

### **2023 Old Boys Tour**

But back to petrol-guzzling, smoking Nortons. Early this month, hence the late "Source", our annual "Old Boys Tour" started. This year's theme was "Norton Singles", since all of our group own at least one alongside their Commandos and Dommis. The other new idea was NOT to ride in the Alps that are now overrun by BMW GS models but travel the "Zone". "Zone" stands for "Sovjet Occupation Zone", and our generation still calls the old GDR counties this, if not within hearing of one of their inhabitants!

Since my wife and I have been in various parts of the "Zone" since the iron curtain fell, I knew that the southern parts are a motorcyclists dream with twisty B-roads, up hill and down dale, and very little traffic. Our "Tour Guide" Ralf found a very nice hotel near the Czech border and the welcome we got when we came from the days excursion you see here:



The Landlord looking after his thirsty guests

The first challenge was to get to the hotel. We met at Guenter's place (see his Commando on the "June" page in this year's calendar). Fast Fraaaanzi on his plunger ES2, Guenter on his swinging arm ES2 and I on the "Earls Court" first featherbed Mod 30 ever produced. About 500km later we arrived at the hotel, with very few technical issues but a few unplanned detours that cost time and added miles. I was somewhat relieved since I had had very little time to test the Inter, in fact did but 40 miles on the previous Sunday to see if everything worked.

When we arrived, the others were already well into beers, but then they only travelled 250km that day. Ralph came on his 500T, Rudi on his hodgepodge of Manx components, and Dieter had another interesting mixture that calls itself a pre-war Big 4 but is partly freely invented, partly a post-war ally head engine. However, on the road it all worked well and we had lots of fun riding together.



*Would you want to tour with these characters and bikes? I would, anytime!*

The first day we did a very nice round tour with the motorcycle museum in Augustusburg the main stop. Augustusburg houses a very good collection with the main theme DKW/MZ models since the castle is only a few miles from the old DKW/MZ factory in Zschopau. In fact when I was at MZ sourcing components for our C652 project I often saw the then boss Petr Korous in his office in the new MZ factory which offered a spectacular view over green hills of the Augustusburg.



*Augustusburg not only houses the motorcycle museum but also a historical museum that contains an impressive collection of the local wildlife besides historical artefacts.*

The next day Ralf's 500T that had misfired before gave up after we rode away from the morning tankstop. He was pulled to the hotel by Dieter's trusty Big4, and Ralf started working on the bike, happily ignoring the advice to change the spark plug. After a couple of hours the "Bavarian" half of our group decided to let him continue, supervised by the rest of the "North-German" group, and we had a few hours touring mainly through the Czech republic. Returning in the afternoon we found Ralf still at it, none the wiser, until at long last he changed the spark plug. Guess what ran without problems all of a sudden...

A few hundred yards uphill through the woods ran a narrow-gauge railway, built at the end of the 19th century for tourists, so we went up on our bikes when it was due:



The last day meant parting company with our friends and riding home. Just as we passed over the Czech border back into Germany and refueled the skies opened and we donned our rain suits and decided to take the autobahn for a few miles to get to an A road we planned to take. Naturally, going along the Autobahn in a sort of mobile washing machine, Fraaanzi's ES2 lost its spark and stopped. Guenter as tour guide realized too late we were missing so covered by the spray of the passing trucks Fraaanzi found the problem was not, as we had feared, a drenched magneto, but only the spark plug cap. With a spare one fitted we went on, and, naturally, minutes later the rain stopped!

Without further problems we rode home, in the dry again, and in retrospect this was one of the best Old Boys Tours we have ever done.

I have to thank Otto Ziegler from Liechtenstein who so competently rebuilt my Inter's engine for my completely trouble-free four days on the bike.

## **Our Bikes**

### **Joe's 1952/3 Inter:**

Apart from the fact I had never really done any serious mileage with the Inter, since it was rebuilt I knew that the electrics didn't really work. The dynamo was overhauled and works, but that mechanical voltage regulator made me nervous and since I had never adjusted one I wasn't too sure what to expect.

Add to it I knew we were going to do some serious mileage, probably in interesting weather (see the Autobahn episode above!) so preferred to take the safe and easy route and to put a 12V Alton alternator on c/w electronic regulator.



*Above: Alton dynamo with electronic regulator against the old 6V system*

Putting the Alton ([13.1791](#)) on was easy enough, the regulator I hid in my toolbox and left the old regulator in place for show. Then the problems started. Somehow between battery and light switch the current seemed to simply disappear. Sometimes I measured current, the next second none, and in any case only up to the ammeter ([99-0566](#) resp. [99-0567](#)).

Having spent at least two hours of my Sunday in the workshop with my electronic tester, bought only a few weeks ago to replace my trusty old one of about 30years vintage, I started to question my mental health. I decided to call it a day and went home. A couple of days later I unearthed my trusty old tester, and eureka, current came reliably to the ammeter where it stopped. A new ammeter cured that.

The solution? The practically new tester was faulty and only shows current when it feels like it. A frustrating experience that cost me no end of time.

In retrospect and after just under a thousand miles I am very happy with the Alton conversion and, unless I want to revert back to 100% original for an event, I have little motivation to go back to the old 6 system with mechanic regulator.



*Just before the start. The tank bag I found on one of my "Private" shelves and dimly remembered I had bought it for our Commander demonstrator in 1990 and most probably last used it 30 years ago. It is fixed sideways with a couple of suction cups that work!*

## **Karl's Commander**

After passing my full Motorcycle Licence on Christmas Eve 2021, I decided to buy myself a brand new Royal Enfield Interceptor, but I always wanted a Rotary Norton, so when one of our customers offered us a low mileage 1990 Dorchester Grey Commander, we snapped it up.



During the recommission process, I've had the seat re-upholstered and lowered, fitted new rear shocks and had a full service and tune done by [Norton Motors Ltd.](#)

It is the first time I had ridden a Rotary, and after completing 200 miles, the bike felt very smooth and easy to ride, with the engine being very low in the frame the bike seemed to move very easy with only a slight movement of your body weight. Although, while out riding with our Ashley, on his 850 Commando Mk3, up a very steep hill, he did manage to open his throttle in top gear and race away from me!! I had to drop 2 gears to catch him up!

The plan for the Norton Commander over the winter is a full restoration and rebuild, so keep a look out for updates on our Social Media and via the Newsletter

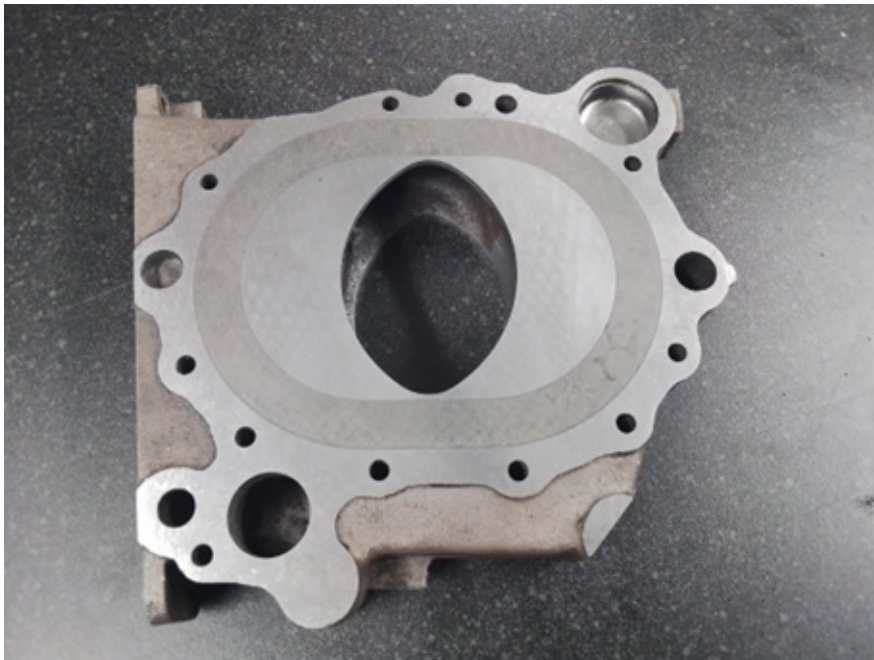
## Tales from the Workshop

June was a busy month for the workshop team with an influx of various and many would say exotic motorcycles.



Mainly we of course see a plethora of Commandos of all ages and types, but many of you know I have a love for all things rotary!

At present we have Commanders and F1's for work from complete bodywork strip downs to molybdenum coating of the plates.



One special bike we have for restoration and recommissioning at present is an F1 588 NRS which is the road going version of the bike the great Mr. Hislop won the TT on "White Charger". Really looking forwards to getting my teeth into that one.





I have to say our favourite bike of the last few months has been a resto/mod on a Mk2 Commando that had to be mechanically and electrically perfect but was still to stay faithful to its age and patina. What a peach it turned out to be riding well with its strong 850 engine and looks as if it came out of the crate from US yesterday. It's different I guess thus why we all loved it so much and the owner's face said it to me as he rode back from his first ride. You know who you are, and we hope many happy miles are ahead on your first Norton!



I think our horror story for this newsletter must be the tin primary cover which was very reluctant to come away from the inner despite leaking from every open opportunity. After many hours of applied pressure, it eventually gave in and slowly started to peel away, to our utter disbelief we had been fighting with what looked to be a whole bottle of Gorilla glue which had been applied liberally to every surface. Mind you the fun didn't stop there as we had to clean the horrible stuff off!

I need to get some time on my personal project which hopefully will be up and running soon with help from Norton Motors in Germany, its not Norton but it is a nice little rotary.



Happy and safe riding Paul and the Workshop Team.

### **Last Call for Calendar Entries!**

The closing date for our Calendar Competition is the **28th July**

If you still wish to enter, please do so soon, as we will not accept any entries after this date. We want to see your high quality pictures of you and your bike along with a bit history of your time with it!

If you haven't already, please send your entries to [newsletter@andover-norton.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@andover-norton.co.uk)

**Wishing our Readers  
"Happy Riding!"**

**The Team at Andover Norton**



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