



Dear Andover Norton Customer,

After May, that included what was for us the highlight of the year, our first Open Day for three years, June was seen as a cooling down period with business as usual.

You, our customers, however had a different idea and made June the second best in the last 12 months. Untypical but welcome and we thank you for your support! Operating worldwide evens the ups and downs. That makes what was once a very seasonal roller coaster ride less problematic and allows to plan and act better.

Supplies are predictably getting problematic sometimes. Our buyer Ashley recently sent a mail round: *"Just had a shock this morning. A part was quoted at £56.00ea, last machined in 2019 when cost was £10.20."*

Another hiccup concerned the supplier of an important part. Ashley wrote: *"I have tried contacting the company by phone and email, and not managed to get an answer. We have suspicion they may have ceased trading but Companies House still shows them as active."*

So Covid, material shortages, and the war in the Ukraine have effects even on Norton spares which you probably saw as a secluded little cosmos removed from the modern world. Good job we have always kept a high level of stock which ignores modern business practice. Hence we can weather the current storm much better than the "just in time" sect.

Our Bikes

Joe:

Not much technically on my bikes in that I spent more than half the month away from work, riding my Commando!

First: The Old Boys Tour 2nd to 5th June

This year's tour actually started on 1st June, not with riding bikes so much but with visiting a BMW legend, Metzger Rudl ("Rudolf the Butcher")

My friends Ralf and Rudi came down from the north a day early, because I had asked Metzger Rudl if he was happy to show us his BMW collection. With Rudi and myself ex-BMW dealers and our friend Guenter with a lifetime career as buyer in BMW's Munich headquarters behind him this is not as groundless as it sounds. Add to it that the collection is less than a mile from my German shop in an unobtrusive

bungalow in our village.

Metzger Rudl was a butcher all his life, and a BMW and sidecar racing fan. He travelled Europe on weekends, visiting the sidecar racers in the paddocks, often taking sausages and, if necessary, spares he had collected on the way in Munich's BMW race shop for them.

He is universally liked and when the sidecar racers switched to more modern engines from the BMW RS models he bought what was on the market, most probably at scrap prices at the time. For him, this wasn't about "investment". He simply loved those engines and the motorcycles they were fitted to and over the years built a collection second to none. This collection is safely in the cellar of his house. Prototypes, variants over the years, the Kompressor RS that Schorsch Meier rode at the lap of honour in the IoM, another RS that Walter Zeller borrowed to ride in parades, sidecar outfits, the complete workbench with tools of a famous race mechanic, no end of pictures, race posters, trophies etc: everything you might want to see is there. Plus a number of production roadsters.



Above: part of the collection with Metzger Rudl (with cap). #49 is the Kompressor Schorsch Meier rode, #1 is the bike Walter Zeller used to ride in parades.

The nice thing about Rudl is that he still burns with enthusiasm. This collection is not about his ego, or about money. He just loves to look after those bikes and visibly enjoys visitors who share his interest and know a few of his heroes.

N.B. talking of butchers and motorcycles, another two butchers come to mind, Paul Dunstall and Norton's and Andover Norton's buyer for decades, Bob Reynolds.

But now : Old Boys Tour (now on bikes!)

Our "Tour Guide" Guenter had booked a very nice hotel in Austria, near Koetschach, and the first day we expected an uneventful and enjoyable ride from my house, where Rudi and Ralf stayed and Guenter collects us in the mornings, picking up Fast Fraanzi at his home about 25 miles nearer the Alps, then on to the Southern Austria and the hotel.

I won't give you the usual phrase about mice and men, but this first slight hiccup was when we crossed the Grossglockner. On the northern side the weather in the valley was nice and sunny. I led the group, feeling well qualified as I had taken part in several historic hill climbs there on various Nortons: the 1937 16H with the marshalls waving the struggling old beast enthusiastically on, on the 1970 Proddy racer, and on my 1960 30M.

Near the top clouds gathered and we took a picture that was to remind of another four years ago with a bigger group including ANIL's ex-MD Nick Hopkins on his Fastback Longrange.



Going over the summit and going down the southern decline we hit really bad weather and quickly put on our rain overalls. The road was covered with hail and a car driver coming up told us other motorcyclists had already come off on the ice. We very cautiously rode on only to find in the first pitch-dark tunnel most other motorcyclists hid from the weather in the tunnel, preferring not to go on for a while. We rode on, however, slowly and cautiously and after a while the rain stopped and we were back in good weather.

A while later all of a sudden Ralf was missing from the group, and a searcher was sent back who found him on the side of the road with the bike misfiring.

We all gathered in the little village on the sidewalk and Ralf took his spark plugs out to see what the problem with the sparks was. On unscrewing the right hand plug things felt somewhat wrong to him and, looking at the thread in the head, it was obvious why the spark plug would screw in but then turn indefinitely.



Ralf's Commando: Time to get the spark plug out, but it would not go in again!

The thread was practically gone in the head. It was now about 5pm, so quick action was required. The friendly locals told us there was a petrol station and car workshop in the next village. Guenter went off to see if these could help, but they had no repair equipment for stripped spark plug threads. They did mention a workshop for agricultural machinery however, not far away. Luckily, that workshop had a tap and a repair sleeve they happily gave us. So Rudi and Ralf cautiously cut the thread in several goes with grease on the tap, always getting it out after a few turns and wiping grease and metal off the drill. By 6pm a new spark plug was fitted and the bike fired up. The tap was returned to the repair shop with a bank note to show our gratitude and we were under way again, arriving at our hotel a bit later than planned.



Morning view from the hotel room window. The twisties calling!

The next couple of days saw us exploring the region, going over the borders to Italy and Slovenia, and mostly escaping the traffic. The only real bad traffic we had was in Kranjska Gora.

On our return journey, just coming down the Alps on the German side, we hit bad weather again, this time donning the rain overalls just in time. Near home I went through a puddle that was far deeper than it seemed and my main fuse blew. Naturally my spare fuses were in my Goretex outfit back home, I wore my leathers, but fortunately Ralf had some in his tank bag, so five minutes later we were under way again.

Apart from the plug thread that went after 120.000 km under Ralf, and an unknown further mileage under previous owners, and my fuse everything went well in the approx.750 miles on the tight twisties in the Alps. My new front brake was definitely a good idea, with reassuring stopping power in all situations.

The Black Forest

A week later my wife and I went to the Black forest for a couple of weeks, taking the Commando with us. Apart from hiking and seeing ANIL's owner Katrin and her little daughter we planned to do a bit of touring on the Commando and this we did together. Plus several times I took to the roads, solo and in a somewhat sportier mode. The Black Forest has a number of roads that are pure joy to ride, nearly as good as a twisty racecourse, and if you can ride during the week the little roads are all yours! Again the proddy racer type brake was a safety boon.

Being a tractor owner (remember our Trusty?) I saw a tractor rallye was on a few villages on and I went there, taking a few pictures.



The SOR in front of a Lanz "Bulldog"

The Lanz "Bulldog" is a legend amongst German Tractor fans. It came out in 1921 and was thus one of the first tractors. It was so enigmatic it led to "Bulldog" becoming the Bavarian word for tractor to date! The engine was a 6.2 litre 2-stroke Diesel single with all of 12bhp. You can imagine the sound!

The name shows the German esteem of the English bulldog. It stands for power and stamina, hence the model designation.

I was reminded how late tractors took over in German farming by the name of a Fendt tractor built in the 1950s, its model name "Dieselross" (Diesel steed). Even I can remember working horses in my childhood on my aunt's farm and the first, very simple tractors.



Another Bulldog at the same rallye, proudly showing its model name

Dare I say it not a single "Trusty" was at that rallye!

Back in Stock

Talking of touring on a Norton Commando we just took delivery of a new batch of our luggage racks. These racks we developed about a decade ago after I had bought Andover Norton, at long last making a plan I had in the early Eighties(!) reality. I did a lot of touring with my girlfriend (now wife) across Europe and was never happy with the equipment available at the time, unsightly structures attached to the motorcycle with a plethora of clamps, bolts and hooks, with panniers that were either off or permanently fixed.

I therefore put a couple of Commandos into Hepco & Becker's workshop, a Fastback and a Roadster with Interstate and Roadster seats, and they came up with a rack that will fit every Commando model.

We also stock panniers ([30 litre](#) and [40 litre](#) variants) that are easily put on and taken off, can be locked to the luggage rack and can be locked themselves.



[Shop](#)

Next Year's Open Day

Our Karl suggested a provisional date for next year's Open Day, the 20th May. So save the date, unless you want to look like this little lady after she realized she had missed this year's!



Ashley's Bit

Recently we have had 3 Tri Spark 0006 kits returned as not working correctly when the revs increased. Considering the number we have sold in the past and only had one with an issue where the air gap to the rotor was just over 3mm all have been correct, so time to test them on my bike. My old system is years old and has done many miles so I know the mating parts electrically are suitable.

Each kit was tested in turn and each one worked correctly, starting first kick every time. With the MK3 it is easy to set up the correct position for 30 BTDC as it can be seen on the crankshaft as per the photo, with the slot in the centre of the hole the crank is exactly at 30 BTDC. The MK3 manual mentions this, but I believe it says TDC, which is not correct as proven by the drawings for the MK3 crank and my own setting up. Checking of the air gap is critical and when you are fitting for the first time to your bike, it must be checked and not assumed to look good enough.



With the new 0006 Tri Spark kits, you must use the instructions they come with. The installation is different to the previous directional kits. The Rotor needs to be in the place indicated according to the instructions and the marks on the 0006 stator plate. I have also noticed that some seem to think that they need to tighten the pillar bolts to the point it crushes the aluminium back plate, this does not need to be that tight, it damages the backplate making future adjustment harder and can also lead to the small thread in the timing for the pillar bolts failing resulting in expensive replacement.

The set up I run is most probably similar to many others, Yuasa YTX14AHL-BS, Tri Spark MOSFET rectifier, PVL 6v coils in series, ANIL HT leads, and Iridium plugs. The loom is original, but checked once a year and maintained when needed. The carbs are Amal Premiers and settings are checked every 5-6K miles. As with any electronic ignition, the carburation and electrical system need to be correct and in good condition, an electronic ignition cannot hide any issues elsewhere, if anything it will make them more apparent.

Ashley's Wheels.

My front wheel is now built, trued and tensioned exactly as per the lacing pattern on my original wheel fitted to my bike. Interestingly, both drawings we have for the MK3 do not support the lacing pattern that was actually used, indicating the drawings we have are incorrect

for the MK3. The MK3 sales brochures we have also show the wheels laced incorrectly. Not surprising as this seems to indicate they used what looks to be a pre MK3 wheel that has been spun, this puts the disc side inner spoke in compression when the brake is applied, instead of tension. The later drawing we have shows a different lacing pattern which I did try to follow this but there is no way it would work with the MC 275 or 288 rims, as it would need different piercings to allow the spokes to sit correctly, the pattern looks like that used on the Triumphs of the day.

Whilst building the front wheel, I set some tension on the disc side spokes with about 1/16" of offset to start from. The wheel was then trued as close as possible and then using the non-disc side spokes I pulled the rim over, with regular checking of the disc side spokes it was clear the tension was increasing in these to a point that I was uncomfortable with suggesting the tension I set them at prior to starting was too high. Out of interest, I then checked my existing front wheel, in 27 years all I have done is check they are not broken and still tight using my fingers. When I actually used a wrench on them I was surprised to find that they were not that tight. The wheel has never broken a spoke or had a spoke pulled through the rim, and has worked perfectly so it must fit for purpose. With the uncomfortable feeling of riding a bike that has a front wheel with spokes that are not that tight but clearly working I decided to restart the truing and tensioning again, this time just nipping up the nipples on the disc side with a screwdriver and truing the rim prior to pulling it over to the required offset.



As it progressed, I checked the lateral run out and brought it back in using the non-disc side spokes when needed, the disc side spokes hold the vertical run out, but I also checked the spoke tension increase on the disc side as well so as not over tension and misshape the rim or pull spokes through the rim, all spokes now ting nicely. The real trick here is resist the temptation to tighten the disc side spokes anymore - this reduces the tension in the non-disc side spokes. This would then allow the offset to be achieved but with very little tension in the non-disc side spokes and massive tension in the disc side.

What is clear is that no matter what lacing pattern used, they all seem to work, even the wheels where the spokes are bent near to the nipples, though I am not sure how long they would last like that, how

both the wheel builder and the owner fail to see it amazes me, but I see it about twice a year on bikes being ridden. I also see a greater amount of broken spokes and pulled through rims, even 3 cracked rims in the 7 years I have been at ANIL, two on professionally built wheels as well. This suggests that the spokes are being tensioned to within an inch of their lives, or the rims are too thin.

Electrical

Recently we have been asked for looms that suit modern rectifiers and no zeners, strange that when I mention we only do the standard loom they are not interested as they could remove the wires they don't need. On the subject of wiring, any wires not used should be well insulated even the earth wires, many leave these floating, not ideal as they could touch something they shouldn't and cause a break down. Some other common mistakes/accidents have been on the MK3, where the start button has been accidentally operated without the starter earth lead being fitted. If you are working on the cabling or starter make sure this starter motor earth return is connected first and removed last, this prevents the loom melting if the start button is inadvertently pressed.

I have been testing Tri Spark MOSFET rectifier, this despite being a 3 phase rectifier will also suit single phase, just use any two of the yellow wires. This rectifier constantly supplies 14.4V and regulates beautifully. When the stator is used I have a battery status monitor (BSM) which shows the battery is recovering for about the first half mile, then it shows a solid green colour. With many of the modern rectifiers you cannot use the original warning light methods, so the use of a BSM is an ideal replacement and worthwhile upgrade as they indicate what the DC voltage is doing and not just indicate the alternator is outputting. Mine is a BSM from Al Osborn, but other versions are available. From defective wiring when riding over road imperfections, defective batteries and a failed rectifier, it has always indicated something was not well. For those not wishing to modify their console/headlamp shell then it can also be handlebar mounted.



Valve guides

A recent query led to an investigation about valve guides, this seemed to be straight forward but then being a MK3 owner I have wondered why the parts book showed heat insulating washers under the spring cups on the inlet side. Having done a few checks on physical items and drawings, things still did not seem right. The issue seems to be common to 850 valve guides, whether original or aftermarket both cast iron and bronze, in that if you use the guides without the insulator, the spring cup sits on the lip of the guide (aftermarket) or the circlip (OE Items) and not directly onto the nicely machined spot face around the guide. See the photo.



What amazes me is that the design actually past into use with the very un-Norton like need to introduce two additional parts - a revised spring cup and a circlip. Surely it would have been easier 'just to keep the 750 guides and associated parts' or if there was a need to make the guide 5/8" then just increase the diameter of the portion that fits into the head and kept the OD of the 750 guide neck ring, this would roughly have left a mm on the radius to locate the guide. This would then have allowed the use with the existing 750 spring cup and no additional circlip.

With this in mind, the advice is quite simple "if you leave off your inlet heat insulators on your 850 cylinder head, then you will either need to open up the ID of your 850 spring cups to clear the lip or circlip, or use 750 spring cups"

Andover Norton on YouTube

We have recently started up our own channel on YouTube. We plan to add a few videos in the coming weeks covering a range of topics, so

don't forget to subscribe to be notified when the next video is uploaded. In the meantime, why not watch our time-lapse taken from the Open Day.

[Our YouTube Page](#)

**Wishing all our customers a
sunny summer of riding!**

The Team at Andover Norton



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