



THE
SOURCE 11|2023

Dear Andover Norton Customer,

As you may have seen we have recently been busy on social media with our Facebook page having quite a few new videos. We have also had a stand at the Stafford Show and had the pleasure to meet quite a few of you, our customers, as well as a lot of potential new customers from the generation that has inherited a Norton or Triumph motorcycle, know little about it, and weren't aware they can get parts and advice from us so easily.

Another front we have been very busy on lately is new parts. And I don't mean just our new calendar:



Andover Norton International Ltd.
2024 Calendar



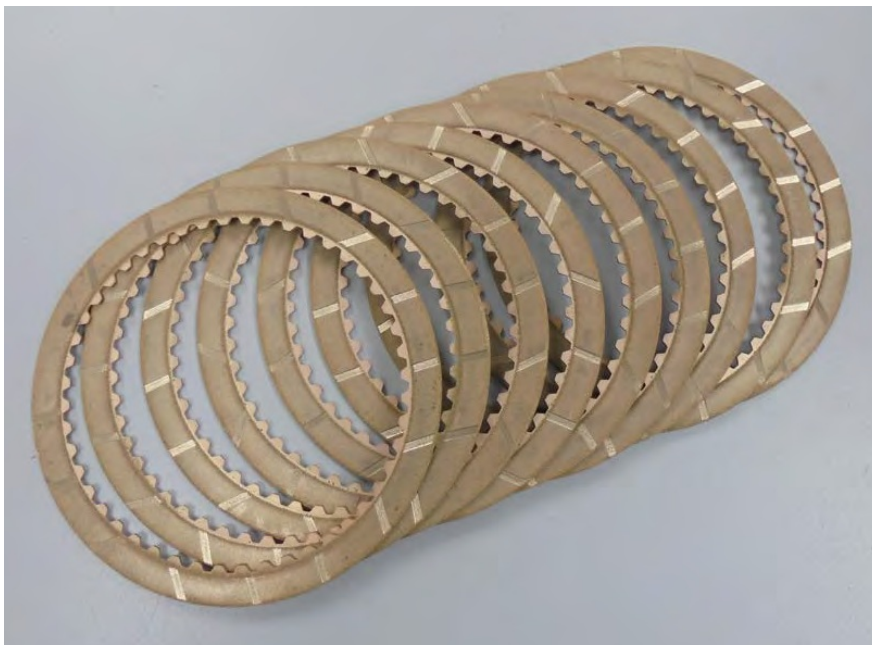
Daryl Wallis - Australia:

760 Commando

My brother's (the red one) and my (the blue one) Commandos taken at a local small town in central Victoria in Australia where we paused in front of an old, now disused, service station.

[Shop](#)

It also mean parts, many of which are for the Norton rotary models. Thanks to Paul working on them in our workshop now, he finds the gaps in our parts range and gets our buyers Simon and Ashley to fill them. One item we discussed years ago but which at the time from the sources we asked were far too expensive to re-manufacture, were clutch friction plates for rotaries. This is one of the gaps now filled, and you can get them as singles or as a set:



Order [13.1976](#) for the set of 9, [69.0559](#) for single plates, and [69.0558](#) for single steel plates

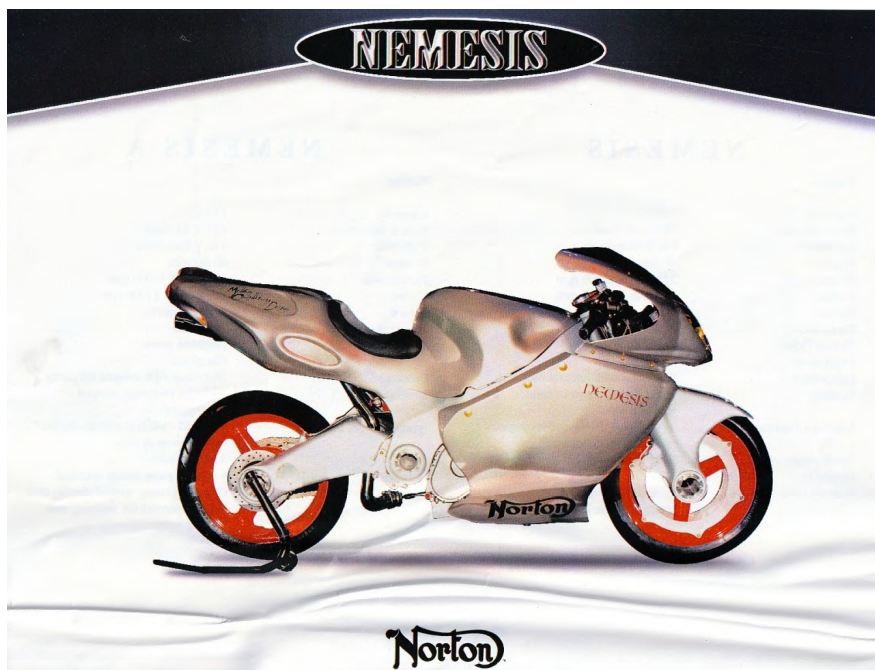
Electric Starter systems for Commandos

Talking of parts, my wife and I visited Ella and Fred of Old Britts in 2010. Thank you both for your hospitality once again! In Fred's workshop he showed me his version of an electric starter kit for a Commando which I found rather complex with it necessitating a new gearbox subframe which means taking the whole Commando apart. Typical Fred it was well-planned but when I saw the Alton version I thought that put the skids on Fred's version, since a) it is easy to fit and b) can be removed, the old parts put back on and hey presto, the bike is original again. Talking to Angie Hemmings her comment was: "The Old Britts one was horrendous to fit... Would have been cheaper to buy a Mk3.." Imagine my surprise when I recently saw what looks like a carbon copy of Fred's idea advertised. Always interesting to see what people come up with!

From my "Yellowing Paper " Collection:

At the Stafford Show Karl met Henry Cole amongst others, one of the group of people who briefly discussed to get the Norton V8 into working, rideable condition. Since Karl knows I was speaking to the various characters involved in the project at the turn of the century he asked me to give my thoughts and views on the project. So here they are:

The "Norton Nemesis": Comedy or Tragedy?



Crumpled since it was in an A4 punched pocket: Nemesis sales prospectus from my archive.

Recent re-awakened interest in the Norton V8 "Nemesis" brought back memories from a quarter of a century ago, a period when I talked regularly to some of the characters involved in this fictional "re-birth of Norton".

What most enthusiasts overlook when discussing motorcycles is that a motorcycle does not fall from heaven. It is the product of an industry where finance and politics make that product possible. Hence a discussion of the "Nemesis" needs to look into the period and the people who led to the idea for this caricature of a motorcycle.

The 1990s were the time when Harley Davidson was incredibly successful which led to a hype amongst well-heeled American investors who hoped to become part of a similar motorcycle success story. This was the period of many start-ups in the States producing, or attempting to produce, Harley clones.

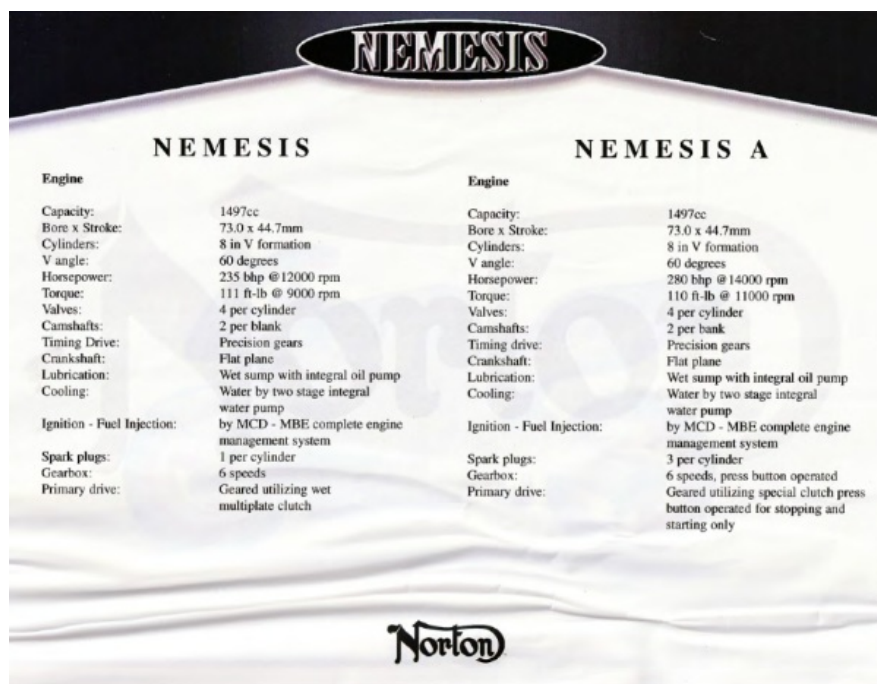
One of the driving forces behind quite a few of these plans was John Silseth II of "Minneapolis Capital". He got well-meaning, naïve and hopeful people to invest in hare-brained schemes for new motorcycle projects. One group he advised was "March Motors International, Inc.", a Minnesota corporation that had an agreement with Robin Herd of "March" allowing them to use the "March" name that had zilch motorcycle connections but sounded good to the shareholders due to the association with top automotive technology.

The March group needed a technical zampano to design a range of bikes for them, And someone, I suspect Silseth, came up with a guru in England, Al Melling. Melling had a somewhat sketchy career in the automotive industry, claiming as a major achievement the design of a Lola Formula 1 engine. Which never ran in a Lola car, nor in any other Formula 1 car to the best of my knowledge. Lola competed in but one race in 1997 and they used a Cosworth engine. Melling also pointed out his design of the TVR AJP8 engine produced from 1998 to 2003. When friends in the industry asked people at TVR about it they clammed up and praise was waited for in vain.

I first came across Melling's name in the early 1990s in Shenstone

when David McDonald proudly showed me the CAD design of what was to become the chassis of the deservedly still-born Norton F2. He later claimed this chassis was meant to house a Melling V2 engine.

The top motorcycle model Melling promised his March clients was the V8 "Nemesis", which was to consist of two 4-cylinder top halves on a common crankcase. The four-cylinder bank only was meant to drive another model, later called the new "Manx".



The back of the flimsy Nemesis prospectus with all the pie-in-the-sky specifications.

Looking at the technical data it is clear the bore and stroke are identical to the then current Kawasaki ZX7-R, as are most probably a lot of components inside the engine. The Nemesis was to have unprecedented horsepower, push-button gearchange as in a F1 car, rear view mirrors replaced by a camera (a feature introduced by Ducati on the MH900E at the time), active suspension, and all engine and chassis parts cast in magnesium. A nice feature was the intake manifold fuel injection, something the ZX7-R did not have at the time.

The whole model bristled with superlatives and thus was infinitely attractive for the American mind that loves nothing more. Hence the investors sank plenty of money in the exercise over years until it dawned on them "March" was no name to fire up motorcyclists' enthusiasm. Silseth, and, yes, I have seen an interview where Melling credits himself for the idea, found the ideal name for the "Dementis" as we used to call it, in Norton. Norton was yet another undertaking that had major problems.

There was a derelict factory with a leaking roof in Shenstone with a few remaining people in it playing backup for the Norton rotaries produced and losing money every month. No product, no management, and the owners, by then the Aquilini Group in Canada, unwilling to invest in something they had foolishly given an acquaintance, wheeler-dealer, Nelson Scalbania, a loan to buy. Since Scalbania neither managed to sell Norton on at a huge profit, which was his original plan, nor to re-pay the loan, the Aquilinis now sat on

the leftovers of a once-famous motorcycle brand.

Silseth brought the blind and the lame together to form the new Norton Motorcycles International, Inc. According to the ca. 200 page "Asset Purchase Agreement" I have, March acquired the assets of Norton, and in turn promised to pay the Aquilinis a sum in cash that gave them a healthy profit on their original unplanned investment, plus shares in the new company. All this depended on a IPO working out. It was one of the many IPOs Silseth planned but which, according to what I heard, never worked out.

Talking of money the funds that the investors put in went into three pockets: Melling's MCD company and those who did work on the bike(s), Silseth's for his commissions, and John Fiebelkorn's, who was on a monthly salary in cash, whilst all others company officials were paid in shares and share options.

The assets Norton brought in were the (mortgaged) premises in Shenstone the trademarks, and their share in Norton Motors (Deutschland), listed as an important asset. A couple of negligible problems here since on the closing date, the 11th March 1998, the Aquilinis were fully aware they did NOT own shares in Norton Motors (Deutschland), nor were they in a position to ever get their recent EU trademark application for Norton through. This fails automatically if but one country concerned has a prior registration, and Norton Motors (Deutschland) had most of Europe outside the UK already registered in its name. No doubt a coincidence that their application for this EU trademark was applied for just before the joint venture agreement was signed, on 5th November, 1997, hence the negative answer of the EU TM authorities was unlikely to arrive for a few more months.

So we have one company that has unproven, non-running, un-tested motorcycle(s) for which they give the very optimistic figure of just over 2 million \$ to produce the first 20 bikes within the same year (!), and the other party selling IP they don't own. The Norton TM was unregistered in most countries of the world, and most countries listed in the agreement at best showing applications for registration. Add to it most of Europe I owned.

In the period 1998 to 2000 I had many visits by the "John & John Show" as I called it, John Silseth and John Fiebelkorn, an ex-Bombardier salesman, The two always painted wholly illusionary pictures of our mutual great future with bags of money just around the corner (remember the IPOs?), and most of our meetings had a hilarious note to them. Two stand out: One, where we sat in a hotel in Munich with Silseth, Fiebelkorn, and their CEO, Joe Novogratz, discussing "floor plans" (i.e. financing) for me to stock the many new models that were imminent.

The other, where Silseth gave me stacks of paper outlining yet another joint venture for the new Norton company to take a Californian Harley clone manufacturer over that existed but was completely broke having lost money on each clone they had produced, a factory he later got other investors to fund as the new "Freedom Motorcycle" company. My question why they should take on yet another black hole for their money was never answered. The answer is in the "Finders Agreement" between Silseth's Minneapple Capital and March Motors that gave Minneapple Capital a 10% commission on every deal Silseth made on Norton's behalf.

Why do I bore you with all this? Just to show there is a lot more behind the front you get presented by MCN or your typical club magazine where even the dumbest plans and motorcycles are hailed as a "new dawn". The typical club types don't want to see the ugly truth. The press, in the few cases they see it, don't want to publish it. I cite Terry Snelling, MCN's main journalist reporting on the V8 "Dementis" at the time, again. When I said "But Terry, this is completely false!" he answered: "Yeah, but it makes good copy!".

In April 1998 in Dorchester Hotel, London, the "Nemesis" was launched for the main investors who were getting restless, having thrown great sums in to a black hole in Rochdale with little to show for it. On a revolving (revolting?) platform the non-functional prototype was illuminated and blinked with its headlights and the investors were told (and MCN with them) that all was good and production imminent. Production was said to start in Shenstone. The few boys left in Shenstone were somewhat surprised by these news, given nobody from the new Norton company had been seen by them let alone any preparations had been made to make production possible.





Dorchester Hotel presentation with production promised for the same year. As it says in a "Visor Down" feature about the day: One legendary freelance journalist turns to Sonic at the launch after listening to all the spiel and says: "My bullshit meter has just gone off the scale."

The whole drama went on for about another year, at the end of which even the most gullible investors of the group had realized these wonderbikes were doomed and the shares and share options they'd been fed with worthless. In their desperation they approached me to produce a "modern" version of my C652 International for them. We asked John Keogh, who, incidentally, had styled most of the "Dementis" but said every time he thought he had finished the thing had grown bulkier yet again. We did the job within 120 days as agreed but by the time the "Combat" was finished in November 1999 Norton Motorcycles International, Inc was bankrupt. The "Combat" prototype is now in Andover and much admired at shows.



The 1999 Norton C652 "Combat" prototype. In production meant to become a two-seater but there is a limit to what can be done in 120 days from a standing start!

This was by no means the end of "Norton Motorcycles International, Inc." since the package went through several more stages, amongst others "Freedom Motorcycles", with the trademark magically already in a new company by the time the last one folded. The inevitable Harley clone V-twin appeared in "Norton" guise.



2003 NEMESIS POWER CRUISER

**WITH THE LARGEST PRODUCTION V-TWIN ENGINE,
THIS MOTORCYCLE ISN'T BEING RELEASED.
IT'S BEING LAUNCHED.**

The things I find in my archive.... Do I hear gasps of horror? This was Silseth's idea for new Nortons all along, and after they were warned about using the Norton name on this sorry Harley clone by shareholders of the now defunct March/Norton enterprise, the name changed to "Freedom Motorcycles". Dated February 2003!

Everything went up in legal smoke on 10th September, 2002, when somewhere along the line the clever minds behind the investment drain exercises were too clever for once. One of the original investors/lenders of money in the "Nemesis" and in 1998 for a while CEO of Norton Motorcycles, Robert Cieslukowski had judgment against Norton Motorcycles to the amount of \$634,720.39.. Since the Norton Trademarks were the only asset he took the Aquilinis to court, demanding the trademarks.

The case was decided in his favour, and the trademarks were acquired by Kenny Dreer's Norton America who, I believe, financed the lawsuit and paid Cieslukowsk his money. Kenny designed the Norton 961 twenty years ago that is still around which brings us, via Garner and now TVS, to present times.



July 2004, Laguna Seca. Kenny Dreer's investor Ollie Curme had the idea to revive the "Norton Girls". Now where did I see that motorcycle recently?

Back to the "Nemesis": did it ever work? The chimaera lasted till the early 1999 when the "investors" lost faith in it and came to me. I believe nobody ever saw the V8 running in those days. All I can find is a video of a four-cylinder slave engine running on a testbed. The feature in MCN showed a bike being ridden down a slope, but most probably only driven by gravity. Then again, building a V8 from a couple of four-cylinder top halves is no black magic. I remember a feature by Alan Cathcart about an Australian sheep farmer who did just that.

Melling's connection with Silseth went on for a while, Melling supposedly designing the engine of the short-lived Norton V-Twin in 2003 and for "Viper Motorcycles", another short-lived brainchild of Silseth.

Whether the Nemesis as a package ever worked could never be tested, and, interestingly, the brain behind it confessed in an interview in "Autocar" in April 1998: "I've never really bothered about chassis. They're just there to carry my engines". That, plus the fact I could not find out who was responsible for the chassis, make me wonder if riding the bike is advisable. Melling was probably not too concerned, saying in an interview most people who buy prestige bikes just put them away and at best only ride to the next pub to be admired.....

Some amusing links to the background of this story:

[Exhibit 10.12 MINNEAPPLE CAPITAL, LTD. 5507 Malibu Drive Edina, Minnes... | Law Insider](#)

<https://casetext.com/case/cieslukowski-v-norton-motors-international>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfyrrlaLXYA>

<https://www.visordown.com/features/general/crusher-norton-nemesis>

<https://www.motorcyclenews.com/news/2010/january/jan2110-10-greatest-scams-cheats-hoaxes-part-2/>

Our Bikes:

Joe's F1 Sport "Lydia"

After putting the carbs back on I had a test ride and everything but the water temperature, which was still on the high side, seemed well. Until I worked on the cooling system again, tried to start Lydia but it only ran on one trochoid and after a short while cut out completely. So what makes an engine go? Spark and fuel I'd say, hence the first thing I looked at was the spark plugs, and quite rightly so. Dare I say it I believe this is the first set fitted in Shenstone in 1992, and they looked it. Points gap was 1mm on one side, 0.95mm on the other:



Oh Dear! I thought and put new plugs in. Tried to start her yet again, but now the poor thing first briefly fired on the L/H trochoid, same as before, but then stopped altogether.

Two possible causes: lack of fuel and lack of current. With the battery as was I put the voltmeter on and whilst with "ignition on" voltage was well over 12V. This collapsed to well under 9V when I pressed the starter button. Nothing new for me, I remembered from my days as a

young, aspiring Norton importer how rotaries declined to fire even though the electric starter happily spun the engine, thus reducing voltage for the electronic ignition to the point where its processor stopped working.

Taking the R/H spark plug out and testing it it did fire at that voltage, but, as I know from my moped days a spark plug out in the open may still spark but ceases to do so in the combustion chamber under pressure. Hence the battery charger was connected up and I started checking the fuel supply. The pump pumped happily, it also pumped though the fuel filter to the T-junction which feeds both carbs individually. Hence, after checking that, I put the blowline on the hoses to the individual carbs and blew through them to make sure there was no obstruction. All back together again, and test. Lydia started straight away, and today I had the opportunity to test ride it. It runs like a bell and is pure joy on the road. Little niggles like a somewhat wooden and ratchety front brake were noted and a note put on the bike since I need to come back on that before I ride Lydia again.



Lydia lives again! And what a treat to ride, too.

On the engine temperature front I had put our lower-yield thermostat [55.1108/74](#) in when I worked on the cooling system. During my test ride noticed it cut in earlier, thus keeping the water temperature down for longer. Those who, like me, have been riding F1s right into the red zone of the water temperature gauge- easy enough on the original, fully-enclosed F1s in city traffic or up in the Alps- will welcome this improvement!

International Shipping

For our US, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand Customers, we have recently opened a new shipping option on our webshop, Royal Mail MP7.

This service is an Untracked international parcel service, that will cost less than normal MP1 Tracked services, but will still aim to deliver within the same timeframe. It can be used for orders up to £250 and a weight of 2kg.

As this an untracked service, it would be ideal for your non-urgent spares orders.


Back in Stock

Over the last couple of weeks, we have had a quite a few enquiries about when a certain part is going to be back in stock.

The best way to be notified as to when a part is Back in Stock, is to use our notification feature on our Webshop.

You will first need to make sure that you are logged in, this can be checked by looking for your registered email address at the top our page. If you do not currently have an account on the web, you can create one for yourself.

Norton Parts Triumph Parts

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Once logged in, search for the part you require by either using the search box, or by the parts diagrams. You should then be able to see a Green Box underneath the image labelled "Accept [Data Privacy](#) and receive an email, when the item is back in stock"



06.1084
CAMSHAFT (STANDARD) WITH LUBE PACK
£315.00 excl. VAT
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By clicking the button in this box, it will then set the alert, and now when the part is available for purchase again, it will automatically notify you by email.

This way you do not have to worry about missing out on parts that are crucial for your project, without having to check the page everyday waiting for them.

Accept [Data Privacy](#) and receive an email, when the item is back in stock

Ok! You will receive an email, when the product is back in stock.

The Classic Mechanics Show at Stafford.

As mentioned previously, Andover Norton were once again at the Stafford show in October with our stand and some of our bikes chatting with customer both old and new!

As always, the team had a great time and would like to thank everyone who came to visit us and our new interactive display. For those who did not manage to attend, below is some highlights of the weekend.



We have also just released a new FAQ video with Ashley.

FAQ Monday with Ash **What to tighten up** **on your Norton Commando**



That's for this month's edition
of "The Source" so until next
time!

The Team At Andover Norton



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