



Dear Andover Norton customer,

Welcome in the New Year that we hope will put the social distancing and continuous caution behind us.

Peter Williams

The past year ended with a sad event for all Norton enthusiasts in that the hero of our youth, Peter Williams, died on 20th December.



I don't pretend to do him justice, nor that I knew him all that well though he called me "friend", which was a kind overstatement.

I first met Peter when he had a Kawasaki shop in Southampton following his being sacked, whilst still in hospital(!) by Norton after his terrible accident that left him crippled. In a lawsuit he got at least some compensation out of Norton that allowed him to open that motorcycle shop.

During my scholarship at Southampton University in 1979/80 as a young Norton enthusiast I visited him, and he kindly allowed an "interview", the notes of which I still have, about his time in the JPN race team. Real interviews need a lot of previous knowledge and background information, neither of which I had, and I apologize in arrears for having wasted Peter's time. The interview did, however, show a likeable aspect of Peter's personality, i.e. to have time for people irrespective of their position, or the viability of their project. As Angela Hemmings says: "Peter would always give his time to people in the paddock. He would give his time to clubs to give talks."

Later, in my time with Norton in Shenstone, and more so with the acquisition of Andover Norton and my role there, I had more to do with Peter and met him at our Open Days as well as on occasion at race tracks where my children and I rode Norton racers and he was a guest of honour. I last saw him in August 2018 at the Red Bull Ring in Austria.

Peter, who was a first class engineer and the brains behind the 1970s JPN Norton effort, also did a few engineering jobs for Andover Norton, one of which has not yet come out into the open. We also bought the remaining stock of his book "Designed to Race" off him

last year. <https://andover-norton.co.uk/en/shop-details/18663>

What struck me about Peter was that, in spite of his racing successes, he seemed to lack the aggression that helps to win races. I may be wrong having met Peter only after his active racing days, but suspect he won in spite of his personality. He was just so good he won without the aggression and the “this chap can’t be faster than I am- I’ll overtake him!” attitude I remember from my own, long-gone, successful race days. Again Angela Hemmings: “He was an excellent racer because he knew the workings of the machine beneath him which gave him that extra push even when he wasn’t on the fastest bike out there.”

Another aspect that confirms it was his attitude in business. In his own words he was “crap at business” hence he never had money. In some cases I had the impression we had to tell him what we thought the job was worth. Rather than to negotiate him down you had to negotiate him up! No wonder his commercial undertakings were anything but profitable.

The one project I see as the peak of his post-Norton career is the build of the JPN Monocoque Replicas. He had the help and support of his partner Greg, the Hemmings who built the engines and gearboxes for him, and Andover Norton as a supplier. However, to make this all come together and to actually get these motorcycles built was, in my opinion, an enormous achievement, not to say a miracle.

The idea to profit from this exercise as a “retirement fund” failed as the price these motorcycles were sold for was far too low to be profitable. Unfortunately the project came at least ten years too late to make those who remembered the JPN Nortons want to part with their money. As I said to Peter: “Had you built these things a decade earlier, idiots like me then still harboured the illusion they were racers, and I for one would have bought one. These days we are too old and slow to still want a bike like that!”



I hear Peter died peacefully in his sleep. I hope he can now race his beloved Monocoque in the sky.

Norton Part Numbers and the Digital World

Those of us who have Nortons other than Commandos, and even those who have Commandos, have encountered the puzzling world of Norton part numbers.

When you look for a part on a modern database, say in Andover Norton’s webshop, you are bound to be frustrated by a lack of results looking for a part number that you found in an old parts list. Norton part numbers changed over the periods that interest me, i.e.

just before the war to the end of Commando production. I will ignore the rotary era here.

Pre-war the numbers were 4 digit ones that obviously made only 9.999 different parts possible. Even then there were parts that you still find on Commandos- say the **kickstart pawl, part# 9699**, or the **front & rear brake shoes, part# 3652** that survived, including the recess for the front wheel speedo drive, as rear brake shoes up to the 850Mk2 Commandos!

Post-war a new system was introduced that incorporated year and model number for the model this part was first used on. The "**Spare Parts List, 1947 Models 1, 16H, 18 & ES2**" lists mostly **A2/xxxm**, **A3/xxx** and **A7/xxx** numbers. The letter is for the year, and the number for the model, so "**A2**" would be a part first specified in the year **1946** for the model 2, i.e. the **16H**.

1947 also lists the first **5-digit numbers**, say **11779** "Bottom Front Crankcase Stud" and the first "**E**" numbers say **E.3227** "Front Engine plate Stud Nut" that you can find on Andover Norton's webshop under a different number (NME3227). The **kickstart pawl has now become A2/356 and the brake shoe A2/443**.

Here is the problem for digital databases in that the number "E.3227" has a dot in the middle that it later loses. A computer is stupid. Change one variant and the numerical system will not find it. Our system finds E3227 but not E.3227.

Marching on to 1956 and the "E" numbers have lost the dot.

1957 sees the introduction of the AMC gearbox and lists the first **04xxxx** numbers, **so our kickstart pawl becomes 040017 and our brake shoe 19584**,

The "Master Spare Parts Price List, May 1959" gives the first "**T**" numbers, say "**T2141**", the cylinder head gasket we still list.

After AMC's takeover part numbers in the 1960s were partly standardized into the AMC 6-digit system with typically **04xxxx** numbers for the AMC gearbox parts, and **01xxxx**, **02xxxx** and **03xxxx** numbers for general fittings common to AMC and Norton models.

The 5-digit Norton numbers without prefix and the **Exxxx** and **Txxxx** numbers also continued into the Commando era. New for Commandos were the "**06xxxx**" numbers, with our old friend the **kickstart pawl ending up as 06-2015 and the brake shoe as 06-3417**.



Above: a few parts lists from my archive, starting with a 1937 parts book through to the 1975 850Mk3 one.

Now why do I bore you with all this?

Because we live in digital times and, unfortunately, Norton never stuck to one way of printing the numbers.

In the 1968 “**Recommended Prices Commando Spares List**” I have (c/w stamp of “Gus Kuhn Motorcycles Ltd”) the 06 numbers are printed in the Andover Norton website’s way, i.e. **06.2015**. However, all old AMC number’s are printed without the dot, say 000010. A few years later the 06 numbers have lost the dot but the NM numbers have acquired it: The 1971 parts list prints **NM. 14367** which was previously 14367 without the “NM”. The 1974 “Supersession and amended Part Number List” lists the NM numbers as **NM 14367** without the dot. But then it lists the “T” numbers as **NMT 1048**.

The 850Mk3 parts list in 1975 introduced the dash in the part numbers, i.e. **06-2015**.

In the old days you went to your local motorcycle shop and the parts manager would disappear into the dark stores mumbling part numbers. It didn’t make a difference to him if the number was written with a dot, a dash, or if it had a blank space in the middle.

The parts stores in the Shenstone factory with Spares Manager Richard Negus and storeman Dave Marshall mumbling part



numbers.
Or rather just posing for the photographer for Norton Motors Investment Brochure! A good excuse for me to show Richard in the function and period I first met him..

These days, with computers, a wrong entry gives you no result, so enter a part number the wrong way and you don't find the part! Andover Norton's system has tried to standardize the numbers in the following ways:

01xxxx to 99xxxx numbers are divided by a dot, i.e. **06.2015**;

Norton's 5-digit numbers have mostly been added up to **NM12345**- no dot, no blank space.

The "T" and "E" numbers have mostly been added up to **NMT1234** or **NME1234**.

If you cannot find a number try only a part of it, say **1234** or **T1234**- the system will find it for you!

Obviously you could also enter the description, but, again, the wrong word yields no result, say if you use the American "fender" for our British "mudguard"!

An amusing anecdote regarding Norton's continuous changing of part numbers happened a few years ago when we still had our old website. I listed the ongoing introduction of more and more parts Andover Norton hadn't done before I bought the company. One of the retailers, a self-proclaimed "leading Norton specialist", in his eagerness to imitate our constant flow of new parts, promptly started to also "introduce new parts".

One of the highlights was his advertising camshaft chains for Norton twins (a part listed since the first Model7 in 1949) as a "new part": He listed that everyday part he must have stocked for years under all three possible numbers: D12/961, NM17806, 06-7689. When I ridiculed this without naming names he claimed he listed three different part numbers because he stocked the same chain from three different manufacturers.....

Fire at the “Top Mountain Motorcycle Museum”

A tragedy happened on 18th January, 2021 at the top of the Timmelsjoch pass in Austria. Fortunately nobody was hurt due to the fire breaking out at about 4am with only caretakers on site. As the museum was mainly of wooden construction it burnt but slowly, so did not collapse for some time. However, until the fire trucks came up from the valley everything was ablaze and very little could be saved.



The tragedy was the quality and rareness of many exhibits. Some may remember a photo of me in the “Source” about three years ago, taken on our “Old Boys Tour” in the course of which we visited the museum. One of the brothers who own it, Attila Schaber, kindly and proudly showed us round the magnificent building due to motorcycle historian Stefan Knittel, their historical advisor, being a member of our group of friends.

I found two of my Nortons there, sold to a (the?) German collector about 20 years ago. One was the JPN Replica I rode in my student days. Not a great loss, there are more out there.

But the other one quite definitely is, the 1979 “Cook Neilson” prototype I bought off Philippe LeRoux in about 1989 and used as go-to-work bike for a while. This is actually the very first Norton rotary I ever rode, in 1984 when I visited the Shenstone factory and was allowed at test ride on it.



Above: the Cook Neilson outside my Hamburg garage in the mid-1980s

This German collector owned a good portion of the exhibits. The tragedy is that many were irreplaceable one-offs: prototypes, works race bikes of famous riders with the history fully documented, and last survivors of various motorcycle models.

In contrast to the often seen “rebuild” of a “genuine and authentic works racer (or prototype)” from a rusty spoke this owner has decided he does not want to have restored, or rather re-invented, the historic exhibits from ashes and imagination, but to let them rest, bitter though that is.



Cause of the fire was reputedly a display monitor in the museum malfunctioning.

So RIP, my good old Cook Neilson, one of the nicest rides I had in the long row of the rotaries that went through my hands as German importer. And so will several other rare or irreplaceable Nortons and Triumphs that were exhibits in that museum.

I still laugh about the fairy tale regarding "Slippery Sam" which was "rebuilt" after the fire in the NMM from molten metal by the late Les Williams using bits that he supposedly "found under his workbench" (must have been a 3-storey workbench!), making the "genuine" Slippery Sam supposedly "even more genuine than before". This remarkable claim I read in "the leading international magazine for Classic Bikes" and it wasn't meant as a joke.

Our Bikes

Due to the year end and a rather busy December plus bad weather nothing from Ashley or Simon.

I have done a little assembly work on my pre-war Inter racebike but not as much as I'd have liked. The next time-consuming job will be to cut and shut the rear mudguard stay my friend Guenter gave me, a leftover from his pre-war Inter he had bought as a spare years ago but never used.



When I first restored the bike (before the crash in Rijeka, remember?) it took several attempts and virtually days to get the stay/mudguard/chainguard assembly into the position I wanted it in. This coming weekend is predicted grey and rainy after the snow of last week so I hope to spend some hours in the workshop and hope, against all better knowledge, I will get the job to the stage that the various items can get welded and finished.



Above: Yes, I know this is all wrong now. But but we will get there!

Brexit

A brief explanation regarding purchasing Norton spare parts from Andover Norton after the UK has left the EU. You will no longer pay UK Vat at 20% on your purchases.

Depending on the value of any order you will be charged on entry: VAT, TVA, BTW etc.at the rate charged by your own country. Possibly Duty will be charged, again depending on the country of destination and value of order.

Contact your local Customs for advice.

Andover Norton declare the goods as Vintage Motorcycle Parts.
Commodity Code: 87141000

Any Vat and any Duty payable is usually collected by the delivery agent acting as Tax Collectors for Customs entry and for this service an administration fee will also be payable.

Featured items



Andover Norton International Ltd.
2021 Calendar




Andover Norton 2021 Calendar

Shop

Paul & Kerry Dickson
Tasmania, Australia
1947 ES2 and Big 4


Norton Commando Restoration Manual by Norman White

Shop



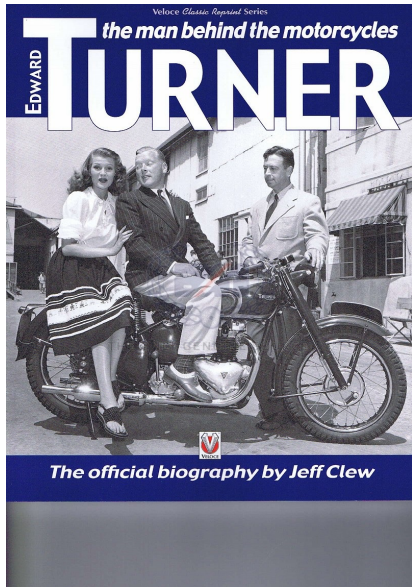
**Norton Commando
Restoration Manual**

Norman White



Edward Turner - The man behind the motorcycles

Shop



Oil Tank

Shop



That's all for now, Until next time!
The Team at Andover Norton



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