



Dear Andover Norton Customer,

The New Year has started as December ended, busy, busy! Our Team quit on the 24th, and on returning found the webshop bursting at the seams with orders, which our picker/packers did their best to get out the door. Add the fact that I, like most EU dealers, decided not to re-order after the first week in December, knowing with the post-Brexit customs complications later orders most probably won't arrive before the Christmas break.

So I, like no doubt many others, placed probably the biggest order in the last 12 months on Andover's first working day of the New Year on Tuesday 4th, and I note the complete order has now left our abode in North Way in four big parcels on Friday 7th. Frankly I find that an amazing feat having watched the Andover webshop orders flooding in over the Christmas holidays and continuing to do so ever since. Over the Christmas break our Karl has interviewed candidates for our picker/packer team and has found a suitable candidate, so we should be back to the same day dispatch routine by February at the very latest.

Talking of Karl, his Christmas present to himself was passing his motorcycle test on the morning of the 24th December. Congratulations, Karl!

Our buyers are busy organizing the supplies, and one notable that came in after a few months were our silenced Roadster silencers, for which I had quite a few pre-orders now that German forums have hailed them as the answer to the noise of the previous versions devoid of absorption material [06.1978/X/SNL](#). However, on typing this I note we are again sold out but we have part of that purchase order still outstanding from our supplier.

Another notable item about to become available again are the Fullauto cylinder heads. John Snead, who bought the project of its initiator, found what our Ashley had suspected when we looked at the project, i.e. that the casting dies were not a practical proposition. So John decided to get proper tooling made which meant a delay for re-starting production. The pictures we have seen so far look very promising, and we hope to have the first samples of 750 and 850 heads in Andover in February.

Prices aren't decided on yet because we don't yet know what the heads will cost door-to-door but will be announced as soon as we have the heads. Part numbers are [06.4097](#) for the 750 head, [06.3830](#) for the 850



But now on to matters of, I hope, general interest:

The Motorcycle Designer's "Orange Seat" Affliction

As told in [Mick Duckworth's](#) book "Norton Commando" the first Commandos were styled by Wolf Ohlins, an advertising agency in London, and a spectacular job they made of it. Which is why the early Fastbacks can be found in every book or exhibition on motorcycle design. My own 1968 Fastback, cover girl of [Steve Wilson's](#) "Norton" history was invited to the BMW/Villa d'Este exhibition a few years ago, and "The Art of the Motorcycle" showed another one.

One bee in all motorcycle designer's bonnets is an orange seat, amazingly a virus that seems to afflict motorcycling designers as well as non-motorcyclists like Wolf Ohlins' man.

One should think that an experienced motorcyclist did not put an orange (or yellow, another fashion!) seat on a motorcycle. It is completely unpractical unless the motorcycle is a never-to-be-used exhibition piece. Ever looked at an orange seat after someone in black leathers or, worse, waxed cotton has used it for a while? O.k. so it probably looks good on the showroom floor, as did the chromed brake discs the Norton and Triumph factories put on Commandos and Bonneville's. But in practice an orange seat looks as bad after a while as a chromed cast disc works in the wet!

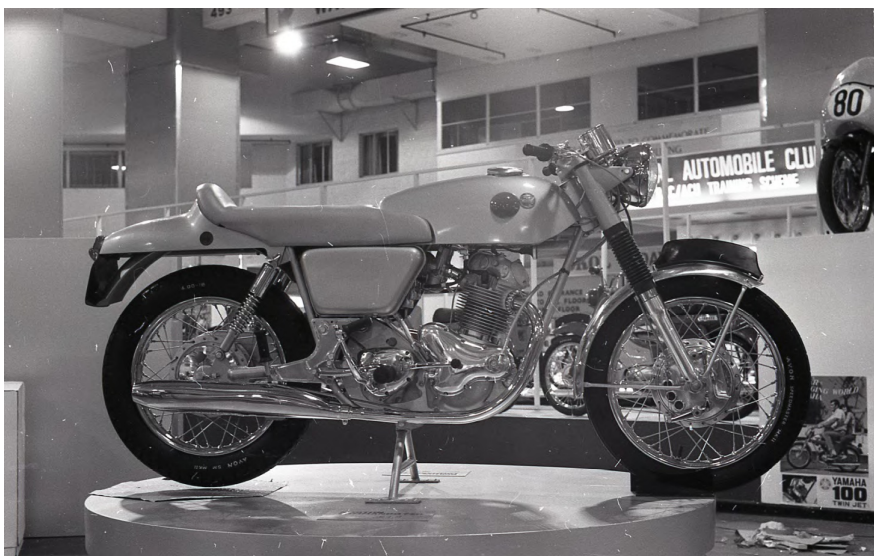


Above: The original Fastback seat I got loaned by my friend Rudi Rudisch

If you follow our [“facebook”](#) page you have probably seen my recent piece on a Fastback seat a friend lent me so we have a template for an original seat base. We have the drawing but it is always good to have an actual 3D original example in case the part was modified for production and possible changes were not documented in the drawing.

I could not believe production Fastbacks were actually **sold** with these orange seats but my friend Stefan Knittel, eminent motorcycle historian and Norton nut, told me years ago he had seen one in Italy on a bike, and the seat we now have is most certainly an original one.

Unfortunately I have but black-and-white pictures of the 1967 prototype Commando exhibition bike like the one below. The seat on it, by the way, looks like the rear padding was added as an afterthought.



Note the 18” rear wheel (original Atlas no doubt), the silver frame (most probably never painted silver in production), and a plethora of other details that were changed for production, say levers and footrests polished and chromed against the early production dull chrome.

The latest post about the new Norton V4 continues the “Norton

Orange Seat" tradition:



BMW, too, has a long-lasting love affair with orange seats; I remember the G/S models with them and dimly remember K-Models of the 1980s with one. And that fashion is ongoing, looking at the accessory seats offered for BMWs on the net.

My personal experience with an orange-seated Norton, at least the feeble attempt for one, goes back to 1997. We had shown our "Ugly Duckling" C652 Norton in Birmingham, where the legendary Geoff Duke was kind enough to ride it into the exhibition and made the front page of MCN on it. The "Ugly Duckling" bike was assembled in haste by Dave Pearce of Tigcraft within few days for that show.



The "Ugly Duckling" as presented at the 1997 Birmingham Show

After getting the well-deserved flack about the non-existent styling, we entrusted Adam White of Factory Design, London, with a rolling chassis to transform the bike into something more pleasing to the eye. Adam, himself a motorcyclist of long standing, did this beautifully, but looking at his exercise you see the seat colour he came up with.....



Above: first mock-up with foam seat and side panels, new contour outlined on the petrol tank.

To Adam's great disappointment I told him *"Orange? Over my dead body!"*, solely for practical reasons. So our first, the press bike, ended up with a light grey/dark grey seat and all production ones after that got a dark grey/black one.

Historical Norton Design

I may have told the story how I saw a Norton 850Mk3 Interstate in silver with black & red at the 1976 Elephant Rally at Nuerburgring and fell in love with the lines of the bike.

I have since become an admirer of most Norton motorcycles for their beauty, with the, dare I say it, exception of the late wideline and all slimline models. The early featherbeds were works of art, and the garden gate and rigid models look like the legendary quote "What looks right is right!" All later ones look utilitarian, as if when the bike was ready for production someone said: "Oh well, I guess it has to have a petrol tank and a seat, too!" Which is in stark contrast to the beautiful Triumphs of that era. That said I still believe that the Nortons were technically superior in virtually all respects but, unfortunately, that did not show.

The "face" of a motorcycle is to an great percentage the petrol tank. It hurts to see a bike wrongly restored, but worst is a wrongly-painted petrol tank. The worst in are normally the cammy models that are admittedly not easy to get right. That said even the normal road models are more often than not painted wrongly rather than correctly.



Petrol tank of a Dommi offered for sale. Nicely painted but, unfortunately, completely wrong.

The first Norton I restored was the 1937 civilian 16H I bought off a man in Hayling Island in 1976 for the princely sum of 100 Pound Sterling. It was a runner but unrestored, and after riding it to the ferry in Harwich and taking the ferry to Hamburg I decided on a full restoration.

The petrol tank was, which still is popular "restoration" practice on these early Nortons, painted silver. These early petrol tanks are made

of very thin gauge steel sheet and are very tricky to unchrome and rechrome. Taking the silver paint off I could see that the surface of the tank had rust pitting in the areas that had not been protected by panels but the outline of the original panels could clearly be seen and marked. With my limited resources I drew the outlines of the panels on paper sheets before the tank went off to polishing and chroming. Later the panels were painted back on and I lined them with a normal school brush. These days I leave that job to a specialist who does a beautiful, professional job for very reasonable money.



Our 16H just before I sold it. The bike my kids and I started our racing on, soon to progress to faster Nortons. I know the "Norton" transfer is not correctly placed, sorry!

Years later I did the same exercise with my 1956 ES2, again completely painted over in grey, but sold, 50% restored, after overload of work and other, more interesting Norton, made it unlikely the bike would ever get finished.

The templates I still have and will shortly put up on our "Technical Database" section.

Worst are most restorations of cammy Nortons, be it pre-war or post-war. Since my pre-war "Kleber" racer sported a pure fantasy paintjob on its petrol tank, accompanied by a copy from a Norton book showing a museum bike with the petrol tank painted just like this, I had to start from scratch. Fortunately, my daughter Katrin is a product designer and helped me with the project, copying original pictures of unrestored racers and projecting them on the wrongly-painted tank:



This helped no end because we could then draw and measure on the object and the result looks rather more like a 1937 racing Inter petrol tank than the previous paintjob. The tricky thing is that both tank sides are by no means identical:



The result looks less of a caricature. The oil tank was also tricky in that on period photos the rider's leg tends to cover most of it. I came up with a design which is a mixture of taking dimensions of old photographs and hints from Otto Ziegler, a Norton cammy specialist. And this is the completed bike :



I use pictures from the era, and intentionally not the pictures from the annual sales brochure "Roadholder". These are often misleading in detail since the pictures not only show pre-production bikes but are furthermore heavily retouched. They can point into the right direction but it is safest to use period photographs.

Believe it or not but the very same applies to Commandos. I did take notes of the original linings and D-shaped panels of Commandos that I will also put into our service page, together with some colour information.

Another eyesore is wrong transfers on petrol tanks. Typically Commando transfers are used on historical motorcycles, as on this Manx tank:



Quite apart from the oversize transfer that should be the “Norton Registered Trade Mark” one used on all Nortons from the 1930s to, on Manxes, the 1960s [A2/685](#) the lines are wrong since the panel has a sweeping curve at the rear, **NOT** running parallel to the knee recess.



Above: the real deal, contemporary photograph.

You may well think the above is a somewhat obsessive piece on petrol tank design but if you have done your homework on the model you want to acquire and then find, as on the Dommi example above, the whole bike becomes an eyesore simply by a paintjob applied costly and professionally that is totally wrong. That hurts and makes the whole bike look unprofessional.

Our Bikes

Joe, 1971 750 Shortstroke Roadster

My 1971 Signal Orange Roadster, everyday bike for me, has now done about 22.000 miles under me after the rebuild. Living in a densely populated area and doing most of my daily riding on busy roads in commuter traffic I have repeatedly seen the limits of the duplex front brake. It became crystal clear that a brake that was more than a match to drum-braked Minis and Beetles in its early days is now, in the days that all four-wheeled opponents have brilliant disc brakes supported by ABS is getting dangerous.

I have, therefore, decided to switch to a disc brake but not the normal 1972-on one that is more than adequate with our 13mm master cylinders [06.4871/13](#) for all pre-Mk3s and [06.5742/13](#) for Mk3s.

However, to improve matters further I plan to install a kit we will then offer in our webshop as soon as I have done the job and listed the components. More (hopefully) next month.

Open Day 2022

After two cancellations thanks to Covid, we are pleased to announce that we have set a date for our 2022 Open Day!



ANDOVER NORTON INTERNATIONAL LTD.
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**Invitation to the 2022
Andover Norton Open Day**
Saturday 21st May
10am to 4.30pm

Address: Unit 6, Wooler Park
North Way, Andover. SP10 5AZ
w3w.co/wimp.clumped.scouting

Visit our new, bigger premises!
Meet the team of Andover Norton!
Enjoy the company of your fellow riders!
Get a high quality photo of your motorcycle!

If you would like to collect spares please pre-order at least 3 days in advance.

Just like previous years, our Open Day is our chance to catch up with you and fellow riders and will be our first at our new premises. We will be taking photos on the day and a Barbeque will be running for our hungry visitors.

We can arrange for any orders you might want to collect on the day to be ready, but we ask that you place them at least 3 days in advance to allow our picking team to prepare them, as we will not be selling parts on the day.

We will also taking donations for the [Wessex Blood Bikes Charity](#), who help transport vital medical supplies to Hospitals and Pharmacies to help get them to patients as quickly as possible, 24 hours a day. They receive no other funding outside of charitable donations and our proud to be able to support their vital services.

We have also registered our location on [What3Words](#) for navigation right to our front door!

So mark your calendars for Saturday 21st of May and we hope to see you there!

Featured Products



**APCP2195-1002EO
2-PISTON CALIPER (L/H
BEHIND FORK)**

[Shop](#)

**APCP2195-1003EO
2-PISTON CALIPER (R/H
BEHIND FORK)**

[Shop](#)



The CP2195 caliper was produced from 1965 to 1979 for racing and Super-Sports motorcycles (Norvil Proddy Racers, Rickmans and Ducatis come to mind) until superseded by the square-ribbed CP2696-38EO caliper in 1980 which is still being produced today.

Although the generally available CP2696 caliper has the same mounting dimensions and uses the same pads and pistons as CP2195, it does not have the round ribbing at both ends like the original product and is not handed.

Our CP2195 calipers are forged and hard anodized.

The CP2195 was unavailable for decades but was briefly reintroduced after the fire at the UK's National Motorcycle museum in 2004. After the small number of calipers produced to restore the museum bikes had run out Andover Norton commissioned another batch of CP2195 calipers for the discerning restorer or enthusiast insisting on the authentic component to rebuild, say, a genuine Norvil Proddy Racer manufactured in the Thruxton Raceshop.

These calipers were made exclusively for and are solely available from Andover Norton.



**13.9997
Andover Norton Neck
Tube (Snood)**

[Shop](#)

**That's we have time for now,
so until next time!**

The Team at Andover Norton



Andover Norton International Ltd

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