



WE'RE ALL HERE BECAUSE WE'RE NOT ALL THERE



Norton Colorado

www.nortoncolorado.org

Newsletter

March 2024



Upcoming Events

Spring tech day still looking for a host, any volunteers?

2024 Calendar coming soon.

Look for club emails or check the website for more details about these gatherings.

2024 Norton Club Banquet

Another fun banquet in the history books. This one was a little different than usual due to a snowstorm on Saturday which caused the party to be postponed until Sunday. We lost a few people due to the schedule change, but still a good time was had by all.

This year the club picked up the entire tab thanks to a very generous donation from the estate of Debbie Johnson. Debbie always loved the banquet and other parties so she was definitely there in spirit.

No one volunteered to take over any of the leadership positions and no one left the room during the discussion so we couldn't pick someone the old fashioned way. (Some of us old timers remember when officers were elected when someone left to go to the bathroom.) All of the present officers and others have consented to continue in their positions for another year.

The President's Trophy will go to Bob Martin this year for all of his years participating in the club. Also, it was decided to retire the Trophy, so ending up at Bob's garage is appropriate since he designed and made the plaque. Couldn't think of a more deserving member.

The gift exchange was a little subdued this year, with very little stealing going on. There were some nice gifts including several bottles of liquor, a box of steaks, some clothes, toys, tools and I think the highlight was a pair of saddle bags that Sandy took home. They will get used, and look good on the back of her Triumph.







Elvis (?) and Barbara

TALES FROM THE SHED

Carb chaos! Frank's been fighting with simple things. Take a deep breath...

You may have assumed from the lack of comments about the supremely glorious Mk3 Commando I bought in the USA last year (actually the year before last by the time you read this) that life has been entirely blissful for months and months now. Has it? Well yes, but not necessarily where the Commando is concerned. And as it's the deep midwinter (late December as I write this) I thought I'd bring you up to speed regarding Norton's finest. I would like to claim that many many happy and fulfilling miles have passed beneath its wheels since I wrote it up a few issues ago – but that would not be entirely true.

Remember summer? It was all going so well, such a short time ago...



More old bikes online: Real-Classic.co.uk

90 | FEBRUARY 2024



Jets old and new. Upping the jet size made no difference to the engine's running

The Woodsman, however, is running as well as only a Royal Enfield can, and is indeed providing wintry wheels, which was the intended purpose when I bought it. My reasoning had been that once the RE was running I could make a list – hopefully a short list – of jobs for the Norton and fix the engine to warm sufficiently for me to open the chokes. When it first ran again after its decades-long layoff over the water, I could open the chokes after the engine had been idling for just a few minutes – no need to actually ride anywhere in fact. That stopped pretty quickly, to the point at which it would only idle – fairly rapidly, around 1000rpm – with the choke slides pretty much closed.

These and similar thoughts were rattling around my cranial emptiness as I piloted the Norton along a familiar road heading home – some time ago, to be honest. The engine has always requested full choke to start. It doesn't really need its carbs tickled, although old habits do die hard. The engine also takes a long time

to warm through – five or six miles, even in what passes for summer – but once fully up to temperature, the chokes can be opened and the engine truly does pull like a train. A good Commando is a great bike indeed.

I was a little baffled by the odd lengthening of the time it took for the engine to warm sufficiently for me to open the chokes. When it first ran again after its decades-long layoff over the water, I could open the chokes after the engine had been idling for just a few minutes – no need to actually ride anywhere in fact. That stopped pretty quickly, to the point at which it would only idle – fairly rapidly, around 1000rpm – with the choke slides pretty much closed.



Back on the bench! No disasters, just some irritations

Puzzling, but not a problem. I was generally delighted by how well it runs, handles and even stops.

Anyway, there I was, heading home after another short local ride. I needed to stop at a crossroads, then turn right across the oncoming traffic. No big deal. I have been riding for quite a while and Commando even boasts reliable indicators! So I did what we do: pulled into the centre of the single-carriageway road, indicating, and after checking behind (the Norton doesn't have a mirror yet, but one will be along shortly), changed down with the usual, pop-pop accompaniment from the bean can silencers, pulled to a stop to wait for a gap and the

engine stopped. Just like that.

I stabbed the starter button, and the engine whirled around with its usual enthusiasm but failed to start. I was maybe a mile from home, and cardiac exercise is good for a chap of a certain age, so all wasn't entirely lost, but what was going on? I thumbed the button again. Same result. I was still sitting between the white lines in the middle of a fairly busy road. Dismounting and pushing felt like a chore too far. Maybe if I...

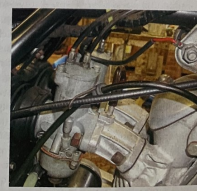
I closed the choke slides. The engine fired instantly the very second I touched the button. So I left the choke lever where it was and rode home. Pulled into The Shed



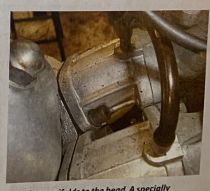
Fitting socket head screws for the float bowls makes access easier than with a screwdriver. Remove the left-side float bowl first



Main jets exposed. They're the original 220s



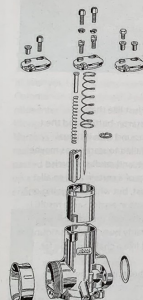
Observe the access to the pair of Allen bolts which hold the manifolds to the head. A specially shortened key is required



Innards exposed. Everything looks pretty much as new



Carbs removed, needles and air screws detached



Observe what appear to be scratches and wear marks. In fact they're solid deposits from the fuel and from standing for a few decades

and admitted the 1000rpm + tickover. Opened the chokes again. The engine misfired and cut out. How mysterious is this?

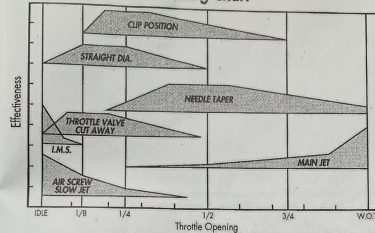
The next fine day found me repeating the experience, but at a less challenging location – a lay-by in fact. Same performance as before. Bike running really well until I wanted it to tick over without the chokes being closed. No dice there then. Still mysterious. Time to seek advice. I am not a proud chap. The easiest and cheapest way to learn is to ask for expert advice. So I did.

I'm a member of a few Norton groups on Facebook, and several of them feature contributions from actual genuine experts – and I say that without a hint of mischievous irony. Folk like Grant Tiller, whose advice and suggestions on things electrical got the bike running

again in the first place. Like Paul Ralph, from Andover Norton, whose knowledge of what fits what and what works is remarkable. And there are many, many others, guys with 6-figure mileages on their own Commandos, which makes a change from a lot of the well-meaning hearsay of which there is far too much on social media. I do not entirely lack a sense of humour and enjoy a good joke, but if I ask a serious question then a serious answer is more welcome than a joke. Guess what: I really did know that the fuelling problem was caused by the wrong grade of engine oil. Sigh...

According to a large proportion of the commentators, the only thing that would fix the odd carburation would be to buy and fit a pair of new Amal carbs, and I considered this option for some time. However, although I am as aware as anyone of the hurdles supplied by the greenwash approach to fuel composition, I also bought the Commando to provide

Jetting Chart



A handy graphic showing when the various bits and fittings do their stuff

all the fun of the chase – the fault chase, that is. No small furry animals were injured by my quest for decent carburation. And new carbs cost a lot of money. And I enjoy a challenge. In this case my challenge was to get the bike running properly again in time to get in a few decent rides before the endless gales and tempests of winter arrived. Gentle reader: I failed. The fix took ages, and is incomplete as I write this at the very end of 2023 – although it's almost there at last.

A lot of advice – from trusted folk – was that the way to fix the weakness of the mix was to up the size of the main jets and raise the float needles a notch to counteract the modern fuel effect. I spent a lot of time

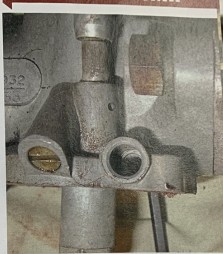
explaining to interested folk (there was a huge amount of interest in the various solutions offered online) that a need to apply choke to the carbs to get the engine running properly when it reveals that the mixture is too weak. My own problem lay in understanding why raising the needles and replacing the main jets would fix the low-speed running. The main jets and their needles have very little effect when the throttle is either closed or only slightly open. But, just in case my understanding of Amal's Mk1 Concentric was flawed, I did indeed replace the main jets (easy) and the needles (less easy, involving tank removal – sigh – and a lot of fiddling). It had no effect at all. And I should say that I didn't like the look of the original needles and needles are cheap, so I just replaced them with new ones.

What next? Saving money is, for me at least, generally a good idea, but buying parts in drips and drabs is slow and to be entirely honest I truly do dislike removing and refitting the carbs on a Commando. I have in fact become quite proficient at the operation, but would hate to be forced to rush the job because I actually needed to ride the bike somewhere. Which is a long-winded way of telling you that I replaced everything I felt it could be – everything inside the carbs, that is. I'd already changed the engine oil, filters, checked the points clearances and pumped up the tyres – all of which were obviously likely to contribute to the poor running. Or not...

Off with the carbs again, then. There are probably photos of these strange days! So New floats were already installed, mainly



New screws and O-rings: one for each carb



Where the air screws live. The drillways need to be clear. They were, of course

because one of the originals had sunk. Several folk suggested that modern stay-up floats don't hold fuel at exactly the correct level, but that they are adjustable (they actually are) and all I needed to do was construct a suitable device to measure the genuine float level. I considered this, but cannot see how a slightly elevated or reduced level in the Concentric's float bowl could suddenly affect the low-throttle running. So I didn't do that, although I did replace the floats and their needles again, entirely because I had a spare set of new ones.

Next: the slides. I should've replaced these when I fitted the new main jet needles, but I am traditionally an idiot. The old slides looked fine, by the way. No knife-edges, score marks nor signs of seizing. Which is a little bit remarkable, because one of them was seized when I first acquired the bike.

Many, many guys told me that it was definitely the idle jet, that although the drillways might look clear (they did) they might be gunged up, so I should clean them out, maybe using a 0.014" guitar string for such a delicate task. I did, the tiny tubes were all clean and it made no difference.

No NO! came the cry. I needed to strip the carbs down again and ensure that tiny drillways I'd never heard of were clear, otherwise it would never run properly. This seemed unlikely, but I did it again, using a lighter gauge of guitar string (0.010") on the tiny drillings this time. I can play the blues, me, even with a carburettor. Made no difference.

The big problem with this process is that due to a lack of moral fibre (or maybe the wrong kind of milk on my All-Brin) I was becoming fed up with removing the carbs:

FEBRUARY 2024 | 93

Subscribe and save: www.Real-Classic.co.uk/subs

More old bikes online: Real-Classic.co.uk



New floats and their needles (again). Float height is adjusted by bending the metal tags. FW decided against this.

Take a look at the photos. Observe how access to the centre pair of fasteners is not entirely easy. However, Norton supplied an especially shortened Allen key to fit those two bolts between the carbs. It fits perfectly. These carbs did not appear to have been removed since... oh... 1975, maybe. The threads were entirely dry and new with no slop at all. This is of course a great thing, but there is no room for leverage and it's not possible to just twist the Allen key in a sensible manner. It needs to be done slowly, because if your fingers are as fat and clumsy as mine, then getting a finger grip on the bolts is not easy.

Advice – and there was lots of it – was to remove the left carb first. I did that. A similar volume of advice suggested the opposite. I tried that too. Neither was worse than the other, which was reassuring, because I have discovered that should you want to remove the float bowls then you really should remove the left-side one first. Try it and see.

Good news continued. The machining on the head for the inlet ports and flanges was as-new. Perfect. The threads were so new that they were sharp. The insulators between carbs and head were perfect, but I replaced them anyway. Suggestions had been made that the original rubber bellows which connect the air filter box to the carbs would have perished, so weakening the mixture. This seemed unlikely to me, but I changed them anyway. I can now draw a cut-away Concentric from memory. I'm sure that will be a useful skill as some point. By the time that point arrives I'll have forgotten it all, of course.

Finally, I had replaced everything, and the only actual fault I'd found was that one of the main jet needle clips had worn completely

through and fell to pieces when I took the needle from the slide. Never seen that before. I replaced them all anyway, along with both air screws and their tiny little O-rings. One soggy day in November I put it all back together again, vowing that if this didn't fix the strange running (Oh yes, I'd balanced all the cables while I was at it) then I'd introduce the Commando to Bude's handsome canal. Of course after only a couple of hours of cursing, dropping things, finding them again, cursing more and getting very fed up indeed with those two central Allen bolts... I couldn't get the (new) fuel pipes to seal. Or even fit. I could fit one bolt to the union at the bottom of either carb but could not then line up the bolt on the adjacent carb. It was driving me bonkers. So I decided to use the old original pipes again. They didn't fit either. Time for a refreshing libation.

Some days later I returned to the task. I did everything exactly the same as before and both unions fit their carbs perfectly.



Even the connector hoses were replaced. The first of the new ones is on the right

More old bikes online: Real-Classic.co.uk

94 | FEBRUARY 2024



Lay-up time. Waiting for the return of summer...

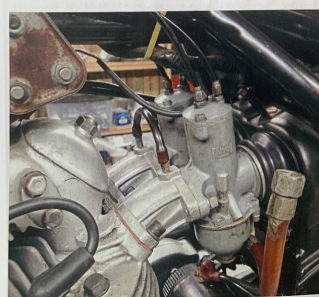
discolorations on both needle ends were actually deposits, and that I could feel them with one of my delicate guitarist's fingernails – but not when wearing gloves. Time to think. I'd cleaned out the airways and found nothing gumming them and had fitted new screws anyway. Then I looked again at the main needles, those which work in the main jets, all of which I'd replaced. They wore the same deposits. More deep thought. As well

as working with the main jet, the needle also works in the needle jet. Could they be gummed up?

Fortunately the carbs don't need to come off to replace the needle jets, which I did. And I started the engine again. It started perfectly, as it usually does. And as it warmed through, so I blipped the throttle in an encouraging way and started to open the chokes, moving the handlebar lever

slowly... slowly... Eventually everything was as nice and hot as it's likely to get while running on its stand indoors, and the chokes were open. Tickover's a little fast, but playing with (new) throttle stops is a relaxing pastime. Time to open the doors and take the bike...

The rain was hammering down and it was dark. The Commando is nice and clean and shiny. Maybe tomorrow... Rc



How can it be that the old hard fuel pipes will fit when the new ones will not?



All together now, complete with the new lead-proof fuel pipes

FEBRUARY 2024 | 95

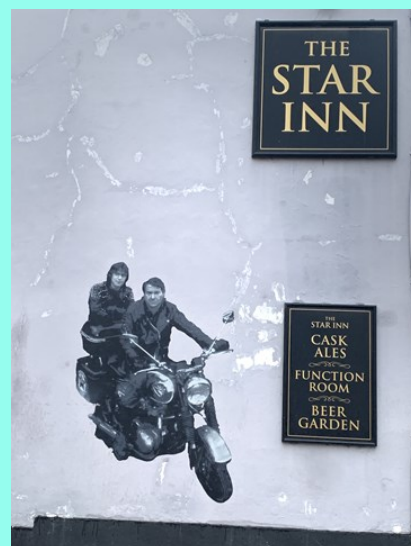
Real-Classic.co.uk/subs



Sammy Miller Museum

Check out their website: [Museum](#) | [Sammy Miller Museum](#)





Picture from a TV series from the 1980's
some of it shot in Nottingham
[Boon \(TV series\) - Wikipedia](#)

The Norton P92



The history of motorcycles is littered with fascinating prototypes that never quite made it to production. One such example is the Norton P92, a single-cylinder motorcycle developed by Norton Villiers Triumph (NVT) in the mid-1970s.

"Parts Bin Special" with Potential

The P92 was born out of a challenging time for the British motorcycle industry. Faced with stiff competition from Japan, NVT sought to create a cost-effective motorcycle using readily available components. The result was a unique blend:

Engine: A slightly modified BSA 500cc single-cylinder engine.

Frame: The frame from the abortive 1971 Triumph Bandit and BSA Fury.

Suspension: Conventional telescopic forks at the front and swinging arm with twin shock absorbers at the rear.

Innovation: The P92's most distinctive feature was its use of Norton's Isolastic engine mounts, which helped to reduce vibration and improve ride comfort.

A Glimpse into a Different Future

While only three prototypes were ever built, the P92 received positive reviews for its smooth handling, comfortable ride, and peppy performance. Motorcycle legend Sammy Miller, who rode one of the prototypes, called it "one of the very best British motorcycles never made." He believed it could have been a commercial success, particularly in markets where smaller-capacity motorcycles were popular.

Reasons for its Demise

Internal struggles: NVT was plagued by internal conflicts and financial difficulties, which hampered its ability to develop new models.

Shifting market preferences: By the mid-1970s, larger-capacity motorcycles were becoming increasingly popular, making the P92's smaller engine less appealing to some buyers.

Lack of investment: NVT may not have invested the necessary resources to refine the P92 and bring it to production.

A Legacy of "What Could Have Been"

The Norton P92 serves as a reminder of the potential and ingenuity that existed within the British motorcycle industry. While it never achieved mass production, it offers a glimpse into an alternate timeline where British motorcycles might have taken a different path. Today, the P92 remains a fascinating footnote in motorcycle history, a testament to the creativity and innovation that can sometimes go unrealized.



Above: A couple of pictures showing the backroom boys weren't short of ideas, the Norton single does exist, it never saw action as Norton pulled the plug on racing just before it made its debut. The AJS was known as the Porcupine and won a world championship.



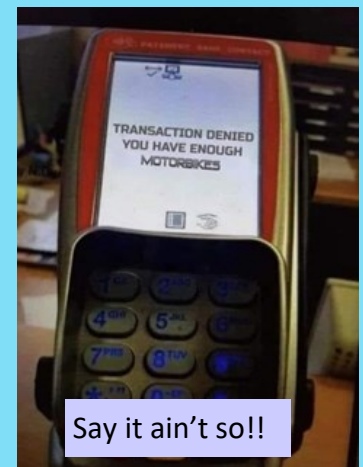
Above: Seen at the Isle of Man races

Below: Built by Peter Allen's friend

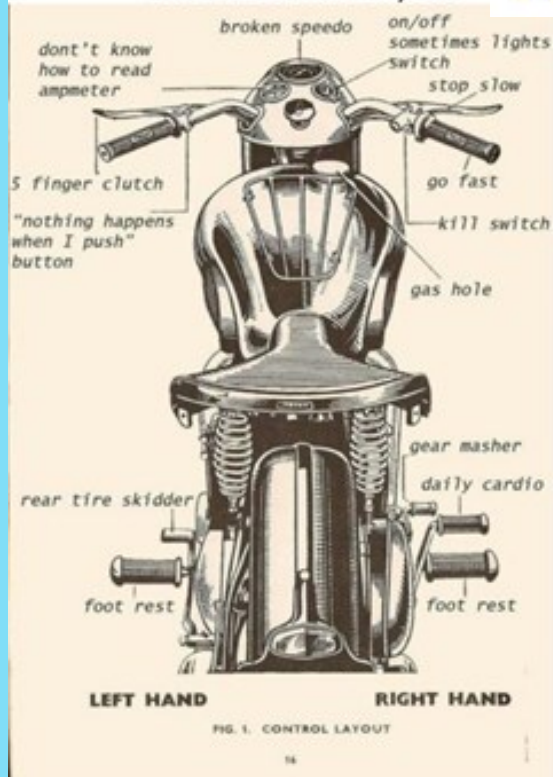




Puzzle du jour: What is that tank that looks like the fuel tank from an old Coleman stove, hung above the headers? Email Scott with answer



Old Bike Control Layout



J T's Shed Clear-out

Castrol

Our Castrol experts are always keen to sniff out a new opportunity! That's why today we're excited to reveal this brand-new range of Castrol-inspired aftershave and perfume: Eau de moteur for men and women. We know you enjoy a bit of fun, so what better way to celebrate special days than with your 'oil-time' favourite garage fragrance?

Motorcycle Stuff on the web:

Check out the club websites new photo galleries:

<https://nortoncolorado.org/galleries/>

Here's the link to the discussions page on the website:

<https://nortoncolorado.org/discussions/>

Harley Davidson Engine Put in Thailand Long-tail Boat (Anyone want to try this? I have a Harley motor for sale. —Scott)

<https://youtu.be/IsW4vfPEirE?si=rTDHF4TI9BKgCzDH>



To be a trophy girl, you must be a really hot babe, plus, you must be willing to show a little ankle!



Jesse Carraway mentioned that he recently acquired most of the used parts, and possibly a number of new ones, from Matt Rambow at Colorado Norton Works. Matt is no longer building complete bikes so he doesn't need that inventory. Jesse had previously purchased the inventory of the club's Parts Depot when we lost our storage site and he already had a large inventory of his own parts, so at this point I think it is safe to say Jesse has the largest inventory of Norton parts in Colorado. He is glad to help out fellow club members who are in need:

Jesse Carraway
815 S. Estes St.
Lakewood CO 80226
(303) 980-6641
jesse@fastmail.fm

Bob Herman has some Norton parts to sell:

I have several Commando seats and a tailpiece that I don't need, and I'd like to offer them to club members before going to eBay or Craigslist with them I don't know what to charge but will take less from a Norton Colorado member than from an "outsider."

1 nice Mk3 seat with hinge

1 nice 750 seat

1 Fastback tailpiece - good shape except for a small crack (damaged in shipping, easily repaired)

I'm going to bring them up to Golden, they will be at Eric's house so a club member won't need to drive down here or pay a big shipping charge.

Bob Herman 719 256-4527; romomoto@gmail.com

Eric Bergman [<bergman@csd.net>](mailto:bergman@csd.net)



Fastback tailpiece

MK3 seat



Highrider seat base

Membership

Membership in Norton Colorado is open to anyone, regardless of whether they own a Norton, or any motorcycle whatsoever.

Dues are \$25 per family unit, payable to "Norton Colorado" and sent to the Treasurer, whose contact information is listed on the last page of this newsletter.

The official club membership list is posted on the club website. Please let Eric know if there is an error.

The membership year begins with the Winter Banquet in February. New members who join after August 1 are credited with membership for the following year.

Club Events

Many events have been scheduled for the 2024 season, usually about 2 per month. Participation in these events will be counted for the President's Award. Events may be added, dropped, or re-scheduled through the year. The schedule can be found in this newsletter or check the schedule on the club website:

<https://nortoncolorado.org/events/>



An apple a day....



Current Occupants

Officers

President

Arnie Beckman (303) 733-4239
president@nortoncolorado.org

Secretary

Eric Bergman (720)400-7835 **NEW #**
secretary@nortoncolorado.org

Treasurer

Charley Gremmels
1832 Forest Ave., Durango, CO 81301
970-946-1302
treasurer@nortoncolorado.org

Staff

Road Captain

Jack Abeyta (303) 426-0594
abeytaa@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Scott Robinson (303)287-6580
(303)915-3064
newsletter@nortoncolorado.org

Webmaster

David Sheesley (720) 277-6563
webmaster@nortoncolorado.org

Technical Advisor

Jim Comstock (719)646-2610
comnoz2@juno.com

Credits: Thanks to Peter Allen, Eric Bergman, Jim Colt, Julian Kowalewski, and Dennis Oberwetter for their contributions to this newsletter.

I also want to say thanks to others who sent me things I will use in future editions.

Norton Colorado
1900 19th Street
Golden, CO 80401

