



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



Norton Colorado

www.nortoncolorado.org

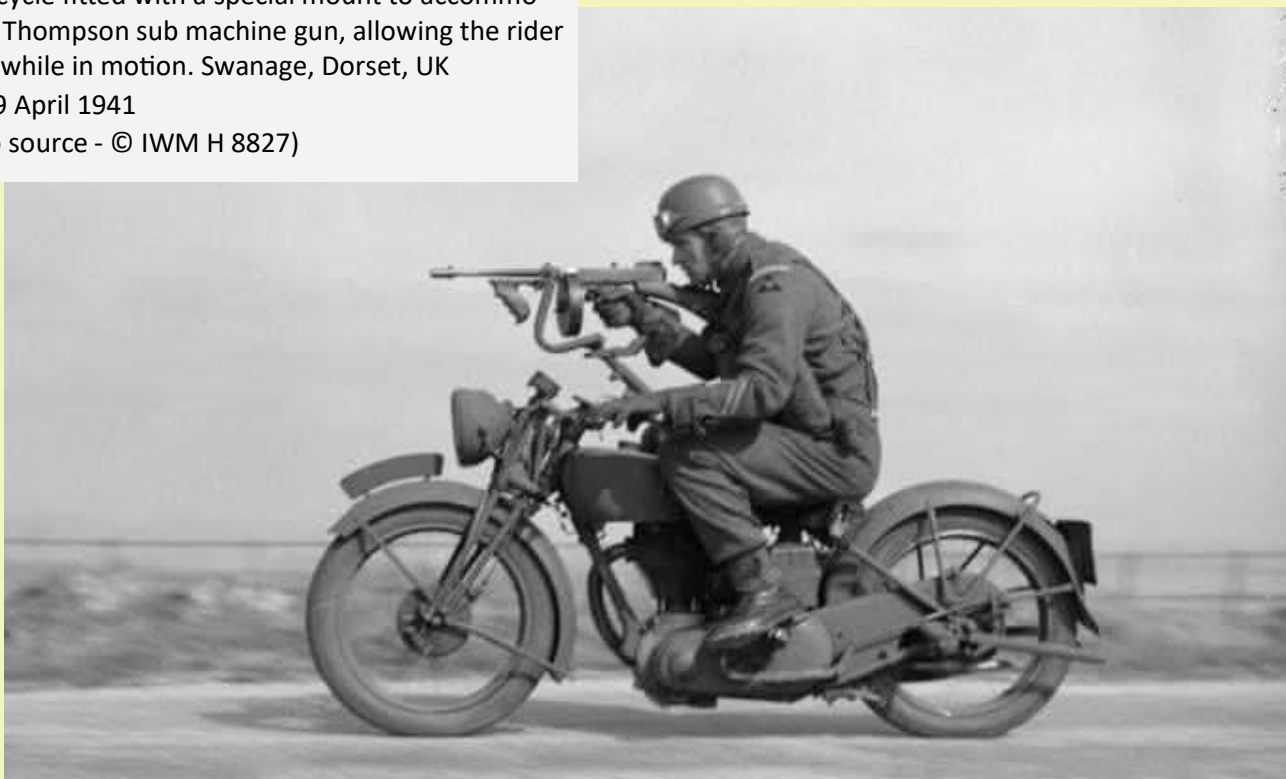
Newsletter

May 2025

A Guardsman of 1st Battalion, Grenadier Guards, 7th Guards Brigade, 3rd Division rides a Norton Model 18 motorcycle fitted with a special mount to accommodate a Thompson sub machine gun, allowing the rider to fire while in motion. Swanage, Dorset, UK

Date: 9 April 1941

(Photo source - © IWM H 8827)



Upcoming Events

2025 Calendar See Page 14

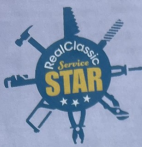
May 18, 2025 (Sunday), Open Garage / Tech Day hosted by Al and Barb Slarks.

June 1, 2025 (Sunday), Big Tent BBQ hosted by Eric Bergman & Susan Saarinen.

June looks busy so check the full calendar on p. 14

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

SURE START



I would like to nominate Boyer Brandson for a service star. I fitted a Powerbox to my Triumph Scrambles Cub replica. This initially ran without a battery but soon after appeared to have failed when being used with a battery. I posted it to them for testing.

A week later, I phoned to ask for any news and was told it was faulty. The alternator I'd been using may have had a coil shorting to

earth, which may have been a cause of the problem. It resulted in a stoppage, and a flat and very hot battery. In spite of that, they sent me a new replacement which I wasn't really expecting. I just wanted to know what went wrong. I bought a new alternator stat to use with the new replacement Powerbox. Thanks, Boyer!

Paul Henshaw, member

COMMANDO KNOW-HOW

Being in my 80s, I have to accept that I probably have fewer years ahead of me than I have behind. Which leads me to think about the highlights of my life. In my case that is easy. It was appearing on the front cover of RC50, (a significant RC milestone in RC's history), riding my beloved Commando with madam riding pillion, and having within its august pages a seven-page piece on my Commando.

I hope this entitles me to offer some comments on Commandos as a follow-up to letters and on youngster FW's musings about his own Commando. I just want to cover two subjects, tickover and ignition, and handling characteristics.

I have owned my 750 Mk 2A for thirty years. It is a Suffolk bike, bought new by a local lad who, in his own admission, was a bit of a hooligan. He swapped it for a Ducati 961, which tells you all you need to know. It passed through another pair of hands before I acquired it from a dealer specialising in classic bikes, for not too much money. In 1995, it was much as it left the factory, with 40,000 miles on the clock, and was worn out in many respects. It hadn't enjoyed much maintenance that I could tell. The swinging arm bushes were, for example, virtually non-existent, which led to very peculiar handling on bends.

With 65,000 miles now showing, I reckon the Commando is as good as it can be, thanks to all the upgrades offered by the likes of RGM, most of which I have fitted as they have become available. So here goes.

Handling: she now handles as well as the



Dommi 99 I owned in the 1970s, which I bought for £6 from a farmer who had a pile of bikes in various stages of disrepair. E8 would have bought me a Sunbeam S8. The Navigator I owned went to a young man, who wished he had never seen it (as he told me later), and the 99 was turned into a café racer, no expense spared. It is still out there somewhere, TDW 374.

However, back to the Commando's handling. This is what I did.

First, I fitted a new swinging arm assembly, and have remembered subsequently to lubricate it with oil once a year through what appears to be a grease-nipple, but isn't. Also make sure the two stud bolts on the front swinging arm tube are tight against the internal spindle, and stay that way. With the wheel off the ground there is no sideways movement.

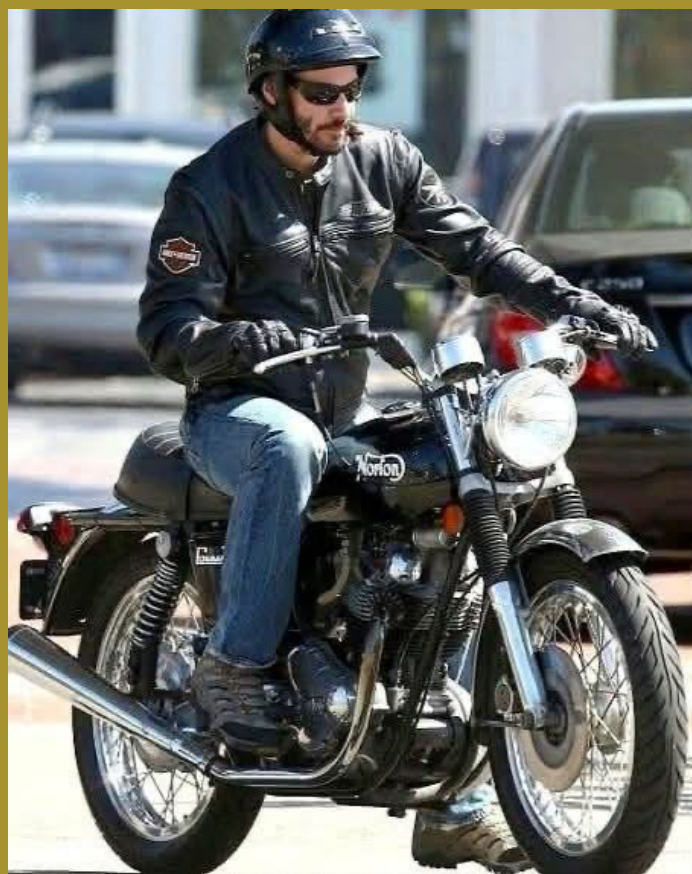
Next, I fitted the Norvil head-steady, which I was kindly given by a friend, and this made

another big difference. Lastly (and this does not apply to Mk3 models), I removed the engine and fitted the Mick Hemmings vernier Isolastic adjusters. I found that a gap of 3 thou was better than the 6 thou recommended. A real 'fit and forget' item. No vibration, runs on rails.

I had already upgraded the front brake with the RGM sleeved master-cylinder conversion, stainless braided hydraulic pipe and EGM pads, so it stops pretty well, without the need to fit one of the many front brake kits that are on offer. I have also fitted the RGM upgraded rear brake shoes.

Next, carburation, the ignition set-up and charging circuits.

I am going to upset a few folk now, but so many problems are solved on a Commando by removing the twin carbs and fitting a single, suitably jetted Amal carb. Andover Norton advised on this requirement, and the RGM manifold took care of the carb fitting. I



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Caught ya, Mom. Now let me get some pants on and I'll come with you.

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am sure the Mikuni is a wonderful carb, but the Amal does the job well enough for me. Also like a velocity stack which fits neatly onto an Amal. It provides a better airflow into the carb, with the venturi effect benefit. To this end I removed the air filter box, which I have always considered unnecessary (unless you signed up for the Dakar rally), and fitted the RGM stack. My Goldie DB34 has this arrangement, and BSA knew a thing or two about performance.

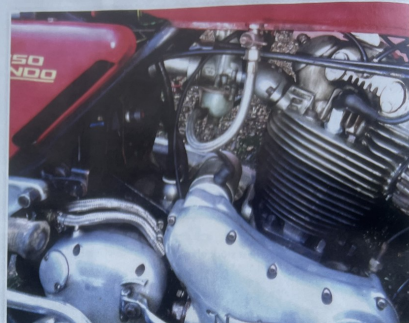
Even with these mods, I was still dissatisfied with the Commando's low-rev running, in particular tickover.

It is important in the classic biking world to have friends who are significantly more knowledgeable than oneself, and fortunately I have two such friends. One advised the fitting of a Tri-Spark ignition system to replace the Boyer Mk3. I had fitted some years ago. I was told the Tri-Spark has better mapping at low revs. The Boyer had been developed for racing, where low-rev performance hardly matters. The Tri-Spark was quite expensive but boy, does it work!

Starting is now a doddle. Air slide lowered on the carb, fire her up with a press of the Alton starter button or a couple of prods on the kickstart, and then almost at once raise the air slide. Within 20 seconds the engine has settled down to a beautiful rhythmic tickover at about 1050rpm. Magic. I sometimes start her with no intention of going anywhere, just to enjoy the tickover. Poor old boy, such simple pleasures. Oh yes, on Rowena's advice, I have fitted a couple of Brisk spark plugs.

It needs a reasonable number of amps to keep the battery topped up when the Alton starter kit is fitted. I found that despite having bought a modern reg/rectifier unit sourced on eBay, for whatever reason, the output would only keep the ammeter needle on the plus side with the headlight on at over 3000rpm. It also got quite hot, so was not passing all the Alton single-phase alternator's output to where it was wanted. More advice from the oracles, and they suggested fitting the Podtronic unit. Now, at 2000rpm we have a plus charge on the ammeter with headlight on main beam (old style headlight bulb).

And finally, as they say, one last tip. Assuming you can see a photo hereabouts, you will notice a little knob affixed to the plate where once the air filter was bolted. This is my fail-safe, get you out of trouble/modification. The wiring on a 53-year-old Commando is not up to much. Heaven knows, I have spent more hours than I care to remember rewiring, resoldering, reconnecting bits and pieces of the loom. If the bike is going to let



you down, be assured it will be something to do with the electrics, usually relating to earthing, or non-earthing. To be fair, I have always got home, but on a number of occasions have had to do roadside bodge to make that happen.

To this end the little knob is the answer. How so? I have wired the battery direct to the ignition system via the knob, just a simple on/off twist. Bypasses everything. A second direct wiring connects to the lights, indicators and horn. Simples. In fact, the normal key ignition functions OK but now I know that if it suddenly fails I have a solution. The output from the Podtronic also goes direct to the battery, as well of course to the white wire on the ignition circuit.

I hope these musings may be of help.

Andy Bone, member

Wow! Thanks for all this, Andy. We're delighted that you still have your Commando, too. In lots of ways, they are tremendous machines, and it is a constant entertainment that even today owners will develop their own machines to suit their own tastes. The only reason that I don't still ride one is that I can't work the clutch



any more, particularly in traffic, despite much experimentation – and more heroic friends insisting that the clutch on the last one was easy. Not for me it wasn't! My own favourite mod is the same single carb conversion that you talk about. I also converted the Mk3 I rode for very many years to a single Amal – one of the original fitments, in fact, reasoning that if and when it wore out I had a spare. Norvil supplied a single-carb stainless early pattern airbox for it. I've also used several electronic ignition kits, but after two dead ones in the 1990s I returned to points. Frank W

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Privateer PACKAGE

A private racing Norton which could beat the factory Commando racers?
Alan Catcart remembers the Kuhn Nortons...

Photos by Kel Edge

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Winning any race is always a big thrill, and winning a championship run over several rounds is deeply satisfying. But winning races and a major title by defeating the factory team run by the company which built your motorcycle – especially if they've gone out of their way NOT to help you do so – must be the ultimate dream of any privateer team, even if so very rarely achieved. One of the handful of privateer equities which pulled off this feat in the upper

echelons of British National road racing down the years was the London-based Gus Kuhn Norton team, whose riders Dave Potter, Charlie Sanby and before them Mick Andrew several times defeated the works Nortons at both National and international level in Production and Formula 750 events in the 1969-1974 period. This was the heyday of big bike four-stroke racing in Britain, and the swan song of the Norton marque as a force to be reckoned with on the racing scene – until its triumphant return to the winners' circle

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KUHN NORTON 750

fifteen years later with the RC588 Rotary racer, yet thanks no doubt to their high-profile John Player sponsorship, as well as the advanced nature of their various chassis designs, it was always the factory Norton racers which grabbed the headlines, whereas, quite frequently, it was the Gus Kuhn riders who actually led them home!

So in 1972, for example, Gus Kuhn's Dave Potter won 17 UK National races and was crowned British 750 champion on a Kuhn Norton, defeating the factory John Player Norton team to do so. Then, the following year he won one of the Brands Hatch rounds of the UK vs. USA Transatlantic Trophy Match Race series, and finished 11th overall in the Imola 200 on the same bike, once again beating the factory Norton team. Also in '72, Potter and Graham Sharp had the satisfaction of getting a Kuhn Norton home in 8th place in the gruelling Barcelona 24 Hours race after the works bike of Williams / Croxford dropped out, to be the first to coax a fast but fragile 750 Commando to the finish of the Spanish marathon.

And in race after race in the 1969/70 seasons, Kuhn Commandos ridden by Mick Andrew, Charlie Sanby, Dave Croxford (later to become a JPN team member, of course!) and Pat Mahoney swept the board in British Production racing, firmly registering the name of the South London dealers as synonymous with fast and reliable Norton roadster-based twins. A certain Barry Sheene even raced a Kuhn Norton once or twice, leading the 1970 Barcelona marathon after 15 hours before the gearbox broke, but also finishing third in the Scarborough Gold Cup the same year on a similar machine.

Unsurprisingly, with their enthusiasm fuelled by this record of success on the track, the café racer crowd of the early '70s queued up to buy Kuhn aftermarket parts for their street Nortons. This justified the whole exercise in the mind of Kuhn boss Vincent Davey, whose company later went on after Norton's demise to become one of the UK's largest BMW dealers, and for a time in the '70s they were also MV Augusta's British importer.

"We were racing to enjoy ourselves, to put a bit back into the sport, and certainly to get publicity for the business, but above all as a morale-booster for our staff," Davey told me. "The racing effort engendered a terrific amount of team spirit in the firm, which meant that we not only had our pick of the best people going, but we kept them long too, and this benefited the customer, who of course was good for business. Our riders Mick Andrew and Dave Potter both started out working here as mechanics before they began racing our bikes, and that meant

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The engine and gearbox mechanisms look remarkably familiar. The rest of the machine? Less so

our efforts were directed towards chaps who were already part of the family. It was a happy team."

Born in 1896 in Birmingham after his German grandfather had immigrated to Britain, Gus Kuhn served in the RNR and RFC during the First World War, before becoming an early star of 1920s two-wheeled motor sport. As a Levis rider he won the first Victory Trial to be staged in 1919, and the following

year finished seventh overall and second in the 250cc class of the Junior TT. He rode further successive years in the Isle of Man without any luck, before joining the works Velocette team to finish fifth in the 1926 Junior TT.

In 1928 Kuhn took part in the first Speedway meeting to be held in the UK at High Beech, and as he now had a wife and four daughters to support, he decided that

this sport newly imported from Australia could provide a lucrative future career. Kuhn moved to London to join Stamford Bridge at Captain, and they won the first Southern League championship in 1929, but closed in 1932 – whereupon he transferred to Wimbledon, where he stayed until 1937, winning a high proportion of the races he started. He then did a stint at Wembley, before becoming Captain of the Lea Bridge team. Gus Kuhn first represented England in 1930 in the first so-called 'Test Match' against Australia, and often rode for his country in the 1930s. He also rode the Wall of Death, always acted as his own mechanic and was very popular with both fans and fellow riders alike.

In the 1930s Gus Kuhn had established his own motorcycle business in South London, and in 1948 a young ex-Paratrooper officer named Vincent Davey joined the firm to manage it for Gus, who had little interest in business. Davey duly fell for the boss's daughter Marian, and after they got married went on to take the company to greater success as a Norton main dealer. Gus Kuhn passed away in August 1966, ironically while his daughter and family were away on the Isle of Man for the Manx GP races.

Norton introduced the Commando in 1968, at the end of which year Gus Kuhn Motors began racing when Vincent Davey found himself with some spare cash thanks to a compulsory purchase order served by the

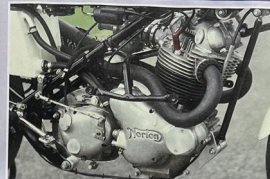


Even the powerplant looks unfamiliar from this angle

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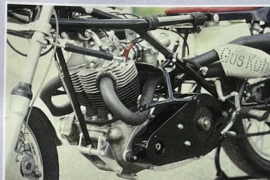
TWO SIDES NOW



Observe that not only is there no isolastic mount, there's very little frame tubery to hang it from



The entire unit is mounted rigidly in the frame and the right-side pedal operates the rear brake



The gearbox is a 5-speeder from Quaffle, while big pipes supply a big flow of essential oil



The rider's left foot changes gear, surprisingly, while the cover over the transmission has its own rubber mountings

local council to build an old peoples' home on land he owned adjacent to the Kuhn workshop! Originally, the team contested the 350 and 500cc classes with Seeley machinery, as well as the 750 Production class with the Nortons they were selling in the dealership – but then as big bike racing became more popular, Davey cut out the smaller classes and concentrated on the big twins.

Kuhn were one of the earliest entrants in F750 racing when it was exported to Europe from the USA, furnishing Daytona winner Don Ernde with a pair of Kuhn Nortons for the 1972 Transatlantic series, even though their own rider Dave Potter hadn't been selected for the British team. By then, the team had developed a very purposeful F750 racer, employing Mark 3 Seeley frames using several of their own special parts, and with Commando-based engines expertly tuned by former AMC race fitter, Jim Boughen.

"We never got any help from Nortons, apart from some standard parts free of charge in 1972-73," recalled Davey. "I think we



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THE OPPOSITION



Norton's 1972 factory racer, complete with its pannier fuel tank; lowering the centre of mass is a racer's priority



Klan Cathcart at the helm, putting the 1972 machine through its paces

regarded as even more of a pain in the neck than the BSA/Triumph team, because after the John Player sponsorship deal along, the Norton boys were under greater pressure not to get beaten by her Norton crew! I remember soon after the JPN team was set up, we beat them rather at a Crystal Palace national in front of nis Poore, Norton's boss, and all the co people. Poor Frank Peris, the JPN manager, got told off in public by Poore ting beaten by us, before he drove off. That sort of thing didn't endear us to in the Norton race shop!

al different Seeley-framed bikes were ter the years by the Kuhn team, being d of gradually as new ones replaced ntil by the last full season, 1973, two mained, each painted the distinctive lours of green with a white stripe, ere both raced by Dave Potter – later his mark riding TZ750 Yamahas for 3, before his untimely death in 1981

at Oulton Park. Both these bikes appear to have survived intact, one ending up in Northern Ireland and the other, after being sold by Kuhn's to Scotland, and raced there with some success for a number of years by Jack Findlay, was then acquired by my good mate Pete Johnson, a successful US Vintage and BoTT champion.

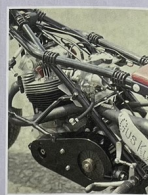
Pete had bought it intending to keep the bike in Britain for use on his frequent business trips to Europe, but in view of his increased commitments in US competition, he'd only raced it in the UK a handful of times during his three years of ownership, before he phoned me up one summer afternoon from across The Pond. 'Please take it to Mallory for the day and blow the cobwebs out for me,' he asked me. Happy to oblige anytime, Peter...

Like the other Mark 3 Seeley frames (the first ones with no front downtube) employed by the Kuhn team over the years, chassis no. MK3 C5149N was fitted by them with a bolt-on ladder-type subframe connecting

the front engine mount to the headstock to provide added rigidity and support the rigidly-mounted engine better. During its time in Scotland, this was removed and the engine mounted flexibly using isolating mounts, presumably to counter vibration.

When Richard Peckett of P&M Motorcycles, to whom Pete had entrusted the task of rebuilding the bike, stripped it out, the first thing he did was to replace the isolating rubbers with solid blocks to mount the engine rigidly again, to stop it shaking about all over the place when run. However, instead of the ladder-type subframe, which could only be bolted in place when the engine was cold and not adjusted subsequently to take heat expansion into account, he fitted a single vertical strut with spherical bearings at each end that could be adjusted up to ensure correct location when the engine was hot. Nice – if not totally original.

The Commando-based Kuhn Norton engine was rebuilt by the late Norton specialist Mick



The frame's top tubes and steering head design are very reminiscent of the famous featherbed. The rest of the frame is rather different



1970 Seeley Mk 3 frame



Although there is no actual set of front downtubes, there is a vertical strut to provide positive location of the engine

Hemmings, who on stripping it found it was fitted with one of the original works-type AMA heads on which the big-valve conversion he later marketed for Norton twins was based. This has a re-angled, larger diameter 40.5mm inlet valve (38mm standard) on each cylinder, but with original size 33mm exhausts, with fully sphered combustion chambers. But the exhaust valves fitted were Nimonic for extra durability, and Mick also installed Carrillo steel rods instead of the standard alloy ones fitted to the bike, which Jim Boughen used to polish longitudinally.

'We used standard valve springs and inlet valves when I did the engine,' recalled Boughen. 'The big valves affected traction on short circuits, and only showed up well on fast tracks like the Isle of Man. But I'd stopped doing Kuhn's engines by '73, and they probably fitted the big-valve head for the Imola 200, which was a very fast track back then.'

Hemmings installed a new set of Powermax pistons, skimmed the head 60 thou to obtain 10.5:1 compression, and flexibly mounted the twin 32mm Amal MK1 Concentric carbs. Instead of the points fitted to the bike, he installed a Boyer electronic ignition running off the 12V battery positioned under the vinyl flap in the distinctive Kuhn seat, while Richard Peckett had new moulds made for all the bodywork, and thus can supply any part seen on the bike to order, including the large-capacity TT fuel tank.

A 45 camshaft, hottest of the Novril range, was fitted just as back then. 'We ran a 45 cam, points ignition and pulled the timing back to 28 degrees,' Jim Boughen told me. 'Lucas Rita electronic ignition was just coming in then, but it was pretty crude, and not very dependable. We hacked a lump out of the timing cover



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Conical rear hub holds the six drum brake, and the chain adjusters look meaningful too

on a couple of engines to fit it, but went back to points afterwards as there didn't seem any advantage! Pete Johnson's bike had just such a part of its timing cover removed...

Mick Hemmings sent the Kuhn Norton crank to car restoration specialists Bassett Down Engineering to be dynamically rebalanced, fitted his own belt-drive conversion for the 5-speed Quaife close-ratio gearbox to replace the original triplex primary chain, and retained the standard Norton diaphragm clutch fitted to the bike, now of course running dry.

'The reason it took us so long to finish a 24-hour race was because Vincent Davey would insist on running that heavy old Norton lutch,' insisted Jim Boughen. 'I wanted to a nice light AMC racing unit which would

also have saved a bit of weight and a lot of complication, but he wouldn't have it, so of course the transmission usually packed up after 8 or 12 hours.' No such problems in UK short circuit racing where the Kuhn bike spent most of its life, though, and the belt drive conversion offers much greater convenience, as well as increased durability.

Slotted back into the Seeley frame freshly rebuilt by P&M, and with the bodywork repainted in what one might term neo-JPN livery rather than the original green Kuhn colours, the engine yielded Pete Johnson some enjoyable rides on the bike, if not a lot of success compared to his 1987 win over Team Obsolete's Dave Roper in the USA's AHMA F750 Vintage championship, riding his P&M-built Triumph-3. My trip to Mallory

was as much to see if the bike could be sorted out a little better, as to sample it for myself.

Having previously ridden the Kuhn Norton's great rival during the 1972 season, the pannier-tank John Player Norton that's one of the four JPNs now owned by Joaquin Folch in Spain, fitted with the same basic Commando-based engine, it was a great chance to compare the two great early-'70s Britbike adversaries for the crown of King Commando. Chassis-wise, it was no contest: the Seeley-framed Kuhn bike won hands down. Like on the JPN, the riding position was very low and tight, so different than on the more spacious Seeley G50s I've ridden and once owned, and almost certainly due to the big tank and shapely, curved seat you sit in the bike, not on it. Even though 18-inch wheels were fitted front and rear, and the twin rear Girling units were the long 12.75-inch ones, I felt as if the rear end was squatting lower than the front, again like the '72 John Player Norton I'd ridden, although that used a 19-inch front wheel.

But whereas that bike steered in a slow, lazy fashion that was stable on fast turns but far from agile on slow ones, its Kuhn rival had finely-balanced, neutral steering that must have made it ideal for the hurly-burly of British short-circuit scratching. Over Mallory's bumps the Novril front end and its sticky KR124A Dunlop tyre coped well, and exiting Gerards the power could be fed in hard without the front end understeering as it does on so many bikes there. But the rear end hopped and skipped around quite a bit, almost certainly due to too stiff springing for my weight – that's a nice change!

After a few laps I found myself completely at home, enjoying the feel of sampling one again the chassis that had to be the epitome



of the black art of 1960s British frame design, as honed to perfection by Colin Seeley and his men. Interestingly, it seemed to 'talk' to the rider more than Seeley frames do when fitted with Matchless G50 engines, which sometimes seem almost too stiff and unforgiving compared to the less agile but more forgiving standard Matchless frame, and can sometimes step out on you without any prior warning. Maybe the extra weight of the twin-cylinder engine made the Kuhn's frame more responsive, but it was a bike that inspired confidence.

The single 11.5in Novril front disc provided quite adequate stopping power, even at Mallory's walking pace hairpin, especially allied with the notable engine braking available from the lusty parallel-twin motor – though you must take care not to bounce the valves on the over-run. And using just a single front disc also reduces unsprung weight, to optimise suspension compliance from the Novril fork, and to help deliver that sharp, agile steering by cutting down on gyroscopic weight. That's one reason why flip-flopping it through the tight Mallory chicane belied the fact that this bike was a 750, especially

by the standards of a modern four-cylinder Superbike – the Norton felt more like a 600 Supersport in comparison.

But the engine was a different matter. Strong, yes; fast, certainly; rider-friendly, NOT! I've ridden several racing Norton twins over the years, including some pretty hot ones that are competitive in modern-day Classic racing, but I never encountered one that vibrated as badly as the Kuhn F750. I could quite understand why the engine had been rubber-mounted by Jack Findlay's team, presumably to make it at least halfway rideable, even if some of the power thus got thrown away down the frame.

There wasn't a lot of poke below 4000 revs, but then it came on strong very strongly, pulling like a tractor up to peak revs of 7200rpm. That's when I managed to persuade myself to hold the throttle open long enough for the rev-counter needle to get that high – before it broke off altogether after a dozen laps, presumably thanks to the vibes! But the immense vibration which set in just over 5000 revs discouraged revving it any harder. I felt it everywhere in my hands, in my feet, through the seat of my pants... It was an all-pervasive

vibro-massage that made riding the bike at competitive speeds very uncomfortable.

And yet a tantalising glimpse of the promised land was afforded by the way the Norton picked up its skirts and fairly rocketed down the Mallory Pit Straight when I got it wound up properly out of Devil's Elbow. Just that, with everything shaking around, including my eyeballs, it kinda made it hard to know when to slow down and brake for Gerards. It also made changing gear on the close-ratio 5-speed Quaife gearbox less easy to do smoothly, though I suspect the reason that the top two changes especially were less than ideal was because of the crossover linkage fitted to deliver the one down, left foot shift pattern that, being a Tank, Mr. Johnson dictated.

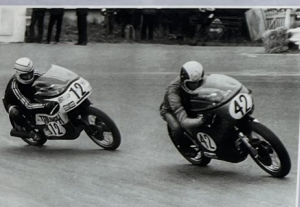
Obviously something wasn't quite right, given that we checked the carburation wasn't too rich, and all quick Norton twin-cylinder racers then and now have similar rigidly-mounted engines like this one – and more to the point, that's how Kuhn built them. From personal experience with my Matchless G50 motor, when my engine tuner experimented with different balance factors that resulted in various degrees of vibration before he eventually hit on an ideal solution, I didn't think there was much doubt that was where the problem lay – the crank had been balanced incorrectly by the car engine specialists Mick Hemmings had resorted to. As I know from riding other Triumph and Norton twins that Mick's built the engines on, each to an improbable degree of near-silky smoothness by British parallel-twin standards, that's not an issue that afflicts his engines nowadays.

Jim Boughen again: 'We used to lighten the flywheels to quicken acceleration by using different centres, but it meant we had to use an unusual balance factor for Norton twins: 78% the stock Commando's was 52% and very special heavy metal inserts to balance the cranks, which we got from the Nuclear Research Establishment at Harlow.

'Whatever vibration we ever got could always be cured by rebalancing the crank, and the engines were so smooth that Don Ende said it was almost like riding a two-stroke when he raced one of our bikes. We'd use 7200-7300rpm normally with no problems about things falling off, and with the 45 cam there's quite a bit more power at the top end, so you want to rev them a bit!'

So there's the fix. The result would surely have been a very effective and enjoyable package, which otherwise summed up the benefits of 1970s-era Norton twins in competition form, especially in short circuit use. No charge for the development riding, Pete... Bo

ALL ACTION IN 1972



re Potter (Kuhn Norton) leads Ray Pickrell (Triumph-3)



Don Ende (Kuhn Norton) leads Dave Aldana (BSA-3) at Brands Hatch in the Transatlantic Match Races one month after winning Daytona 200 on a Yamaha 350

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Texas Vincent Rally

Jack Abeyta just had his 1955 Vincent Black Shadow overhauled so he and Peggy headed to Texas to enjoy it. Peter Allen and Jonathan Chaiken also brought their Vincents.



After riding in the hot Texas sun Peter Allen is thirsty



Murchison Norton Rally March 2025 pictures by Jerry Doe



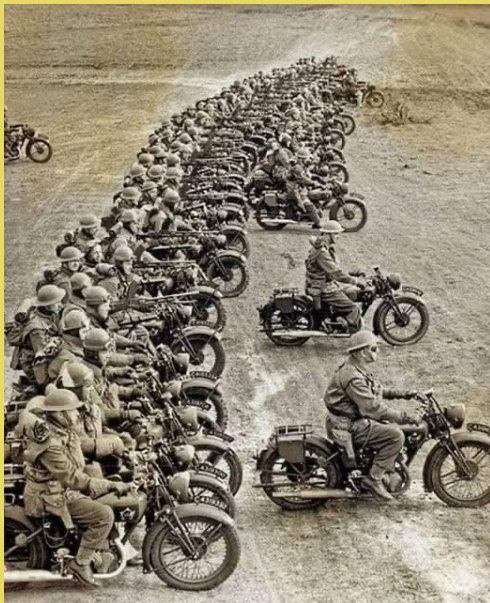
Norton Colorado Spring '25 Ride

The day was perfect and we had a nice turnout, 10 motorcycles, for the first group ride of the year. Thanks to Jerry Doe, with the help of Google Maps, for leading the ride and to Jo Teague for the entertaining recap at ReLive!



Check out the Norton Colorado Spring '25 Ride video that Jo Teague produced on Relive!

<https://www.relive.com/view/vMv8LpBBNPv>



[Mortons Archive: Military motorcycles in World War II | Classic Bike Hub](#)

**THE GARAGE TO HOUSE
RATIO IS JUST PERFECT**



WHEN YOUR PRIORITIES ARE STRAIGHT



Böhmerland was a motorcycle manufacturer in Czechoslovakia, active between 1924-39 of rather unique designs by Albin Hugo Leibisch.

Vehicles featured very strong tube frame chassis, powered by Leibisch designed single-cylinder four-stroke OHV 598cc (16-25hp) engine with a 3-speed transmission.

Motorcycles were produced as the 'Jubilee' with a short frame and the 'Tourster' long frame, enabling the motorcycle to carrying 2-3-4 persons. The tourster incorporated two torpedo fuel tanks (one on either side) and a large rear 'under-slung luggage box.



A late prototype design for a smaller two-stroke 350cc motorcycle was created but only a few prototypes were produced. After WWII in 1952 an attempt was made to produce a low-slung streamline scooter powered by a Zundap 198cc engine, but this also never saw production.

Production came to a halt with the outbreak of WWII, when the factory was taken over for the military effort and Albin and his son were sent to a Czech gulag for no co-operation. Production never recommenced but over 3000 motorcycles had been produced"

Courtesy Classic and Recreation Sports Cars



Rickman Metisse

Norton for Sale



1974 Norton 850 Commando for sale. The engine is running and has recently been worked on. Gaskets will need to be replaced though. The motorcycle is currently located in the Denver Metro area. Asking price of \$10,000.

Please contact:

Mike Ehrmann at
(720) 347- 0105

Mikeehrmann20@gmail.com.

For more information.



This is the card of Bryan Flanigan, used to work at Vintage Twins. Started his own shop about 6 months ago. I've used him for vapor blasting, good guy. Also works on older Jap bikes. Harder and harder these days to find someone to work on classic stuff, spread the word to the club and bring him your business!

<https://trophyclassiccycles.com/>

King Browne



My name is Kevin Bulger and I am from Chicago. I live in Tanzania and my wife and I own www.iridearusha.com. We do adventure motorcycle tours here in Tanzania in East-Africa.

I am looking to start bringing more Americans to explore this amazing country with us. iRide has been operating for 7 years in East-Africa and have guides, mechanics, bikes, follow cars, and all of the routes to have an amazing adventure.

If you think any of your club members could be interested in visiting, I would love to setup time to chat more about the possibilities.

Best,
Kevin Bulger



2025 4 CORNERS Rendezvous

When: Thur.-Sun. June 12-15th

Where: See map for directions to Sam Manganaro's Place 14984 Rd 31, Mancos CO 81328

Who: Hosted by Western Slope Norton Riders and Norton Colorado.

Includes: Fee is \$30.00 for tent camping, morning coffee, good food planned for Friday and Saturday night, door prizes, 50/50 drawing. Frivolous or even serious items for door prizes will be accepted. If you aren't camping there are motels and RV parks close by in Dolores and Cortez. Amazing mountain roads and unbelievable but mostly true campfire stories. Join us and tell a few yourself.

For further information contact Steve Harris at charleysteve10@gmail.com or call 970-946-1960

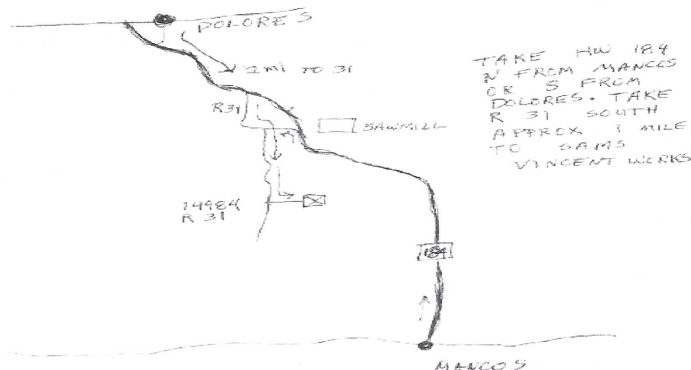
Please R.S.V.P. so we can figure food

Photo is Pete Bredemeier's expertly packed rat bike headed for the

national rally in Tennessee 1992

Photo courtesy of Pete's daughter Molly

Thanks Molly!





The INOA Norton club welcomes
all British motorcycles to the
INOA 2025 *Feather River Rally III*



June 16th through 21st, 2025
Plumas Sierra County Fairgrounds, Quincy, CA
nortonrally.com



The [Northern California Norton Owners Club \(NCNOC\)](#), a chapter of the [International Norton Owners Association \(INOA\)](#), is hosting the INOA 2025 *Feather River Rally III* June 16th-21st 2025, in Quincy, CA.

It will be a lively gathering of over 300 participants and their motorcycles. Enthusiasts of Norton, British, and other motorcycle brands are invited to explore the best roads and destinations the northern Sierra mountains have to offer.

We invite you to join us for the company of fellow motorcyclists and *Feather River Rally III* activities:

- 🍌 **Tech Sessions** – Talks, presentations, demos on mechanics, modifications, repairs, restoration, upgrades, after-market kits, etc.
- 🍌 **Group Rides** – Guided rides. Corner guides to show directions.
- 🍌 **Self-guided Rides** – Rides with maps and directions that can be undertaken by anyone anytime.
- 🍌 **Dinners** – A buffet and a banquet.
- 🍌 **Concours** – Categories covering Norton, British, non-British, and custom motorcycles.
- 🍌 **Awards** – For concours, feats of riding, service to the INOA and its chapters.
- 🍌 **And more:** Trivia, social hours, evening entertainment, spontaneous events.

We will see you in Quincy, CA, at the *Feather River Rally III*! Registration opens early January 2025.
<https://nortonrally.com>

The organizers can be reached at:
2025-rally-committee@nortonrally.com

I am available online to present the rally to your club!
Ian Reddy, Rally Chair
408-218-1087

Please print out these postcards, email them, post them, and include them in your next club newsletter:

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/>

Why our roads are so bad. . . .

https://www.commonsestituteus.org/colorado/research/infrastructure/highway-detours-the-ongoing-shift-of-transportation-dollars-?mc_cid=5560d9a85a&mc_eid=9e0ea9acac

World's First Self-Riding Motorcycle Goes Rogue, Now Touring Without Owner

<https://www.roadrunner.travel/articles/worlds-first-self-riding-motorcycle-goes-rogue-now-touring-without-owner/>

Itchy Boots Cancels US Book Tour Plans - Adventure Rider

<https://www.advrider.com/itchy-boots-cancels-us-book-tour-plans/>



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
(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



Bob Herman has added another toy to his collection. It's a 1951 model NH - which means 350.



Highrider seat base



Norton Colorado 2025 Event Schedule

Here is the first draft of the club's 2025 event schedule. I've taken the liberty (based on past performance) of listing you as a host for an event. Please have a look and let me know if you are still willing to host an event, or if the date needs to be changed. Also, if you would like to host an event of some sort, please contact Eric.

February 8, 2025 (Saturday), 6:30pm, Winter Banquet, Mickey's Top Sirloin, 6950 N. Broadway, Denver.

March 23, 2025 (Sunday) Museum.

April 19, 2025 (Saturday), Group Ride.

May 18, 2025 (Sunday), Open Garage / Tech Day hosted by Al and Barb Slarks.

June 1, 2025 (Sunday), Big Tent BBQ hosted by Eric Bergman & Susan Saarinen.

June 7, 2025 (Saturday), 8am to 2pm, Colorado Vintage Motorcycle Show

June 12-15, 2025 (Thursday-Sunday), Four Corners Rendezvous hosted by Steve Harris and Charley Gremmels.

June 16-21, 2025 (Monday-Saturday), INOA Rally, Quincy, California.

July 6, 2025 (Sunday), Mt. Evans Ride and Brunch hosted by David Sheesley.

July 20, 2025 (Sunday), BMAC Picnic hosted by Frank & Joanne Puckett.

August 3, 2025 (Sunday), BBQ and open garage hosted Jamie & Michelle Jones.

September 7, 2025, Sunday, Old Bike Ride.

September 21, 2025 (Sunday), English Motoring Conclave.

October 11, 2025 (Sunday), Plains Ride, hosted by Scott and Julie Robinson.

October 26, 2025 (Sunday), Open Garage, hosted by Jonathan Chaikin and Tamara.

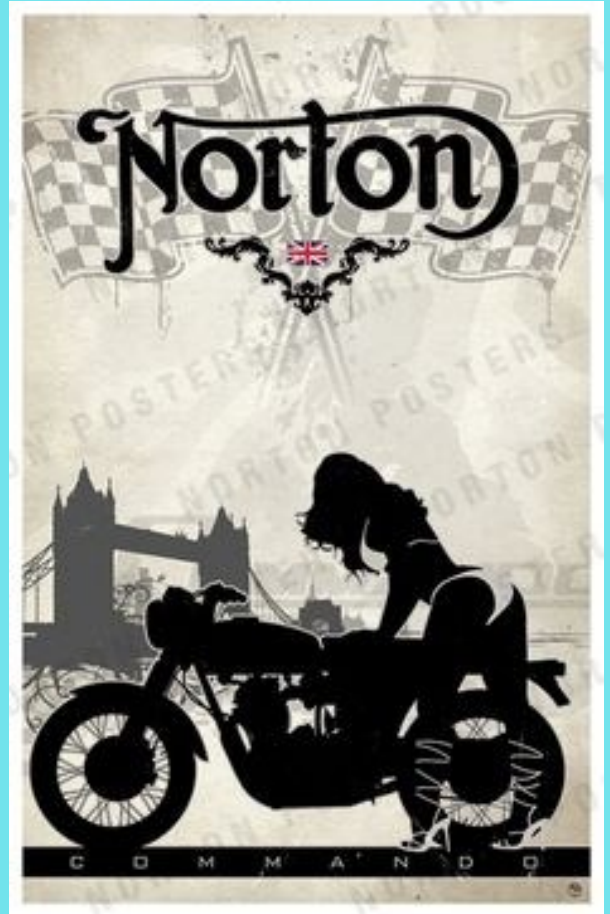
November 8, 2025 (Saturday) Tech Day

December 7, 2025 (Sunday), Pub meeting.

January 1, 2026 (Thursday), Clancy's Irish Pub.

January 18, 2026 (Sunday), Pub meeting.

February 7, 2026 (Sat) Winter Banquet.



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/>



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,CO81301
970-946-1302
treasurer@nortoncolorado.org

Staff

Road Captain

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

Newsletter Editor

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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 Jack and Peggy Abeyta, Eric Bergman, Jim Colt, Jerry Doe, Bob Herman, Julian Kowalewski, Bob Martin, Dennis Oberwetter, Greg Ray and Jo Teague 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

