



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



Norton Colorado

www.nortoncolorado.org

Newsletter

December 2025



Julian Kowalweski
on a 1959 BSA
A7SS, in 1971

Upcoming Events

2025 Calendar See Page 8

December 4, 2025 (Thursday), 1st Thursday Meeting (see flier page 9)

December 7, 2025 (Sunday), Pub meeting.

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

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



Metisse MK5 Cafe Racer. Metisse's own Adelaide engine as used in the MK5 Cafe Racer and Street Scrambler. Engine Configuration: Air cooled parallel twin engine capacity: 997 cc (98 x 66 mm) Power & Torque: 97 bhp @ 8,000rpm & 70 lb/ft @ 7,000rpm Transmission: 5 speed. Metisse Ignition: MBE ECU Fuel system: Twin 42mm throttle bodies & injectors with high pressure fuel pump Exhaust system:



The Norton "Kneeler," an experimental motorcycle raced by Ray Amm in 1953. This innovative but unstable bike featured a lowered center of gravity, with the rider kneeling on a cushion and putting their weight on the foot-pegs.

The bike was fast in a straight line but prone to buffeting, leading to its withdrawal from races like the North West 200 and TT due to stability problems.



Mike Haiwood

[Remembering Mike Hailwood 40 Years After His Death](#)



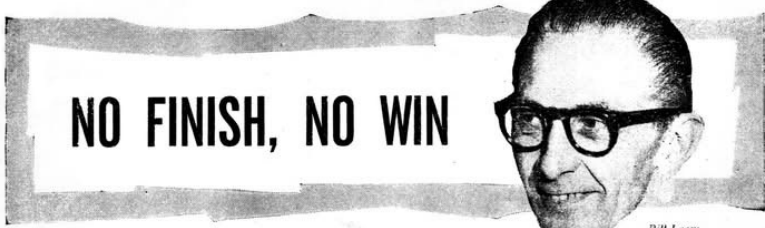
Peter Williams

[Peter Williams: innovator, racer, gentleman... | Classic Bike Hub](#)

Giacomo Agostini

[AMA Motorcycle Museum Hall of Fame | Giacomo Agostini](#)





Bill Lacey Unlocks the Doors of His Tuning Shop and Invites You Inside

By GEORGE WILSON

THAT title is a boil-down of the oldest, most widely quoted maxim in the road-facing game. More than that, it is the maxim which, well ahead of all others, Bill Lacey keeps to the forefront of that egg-shaped head of his when at the bench. In his tuning shop at Slough—apparent from outside as a sort of prefab concrete pill-box on a slice of waste land—Bill already has one dynamometer and pretty soon will have two. The day isn't very far distant when that emporium of tune will be one of the biggest in the country. So Lacey claims. And Bill isn't the sort of chap who makes claims merely for the sake of exercising his tongue.

At this moment 16—yes, sixteen—racing power units and several cylinder heads besides are racked along one workshop wall. There are 14 Nortons, three NSUs and an F.B. Mondial. That number in itself is eloquent but you don't have to be a Mignet to deduce the added significance of this one fact: four of these engines are John Hartie's. (John will again

be riding under the Comerford banner. Two of the four are five-hundreds, the others three-fifties. The plot is that in the season all four will be raced pretty hard. But there will be no risk of having to start in a classic with an engine that has already been thrashed round, say, Mallory Park. Two engines will be in the frames while the other two will always be on the operating table. Frames, wheels, brakes and other bits will be John's own responsibilities.

So far as Bill is concerned reliability will be the chief aim. Says he in that quiet voice of his: "What you have to remember is that the Manx Norton is a production engine. I can get flash power, but too much boosting can lead to trouble."

Bottom-half troubles are unlikely. The Achilles' heel is the highly stressed drive-side main bearing, which Lacey modifies as a matter of course. The crankcase is bored out to take a flanged bearing housing of Lacey's own design. The case is heated to above working temperature and the housing inserted by hand, so that the 4in-diameter flange fits hard up to the

inner crankcase wall and is retained to it by four flush-fitting socket-head screws. Outside, the housing is screwed left-hand and fitted with a locking ring. Already some 40 crankcases have had that treatment and Hartie's will have it too.

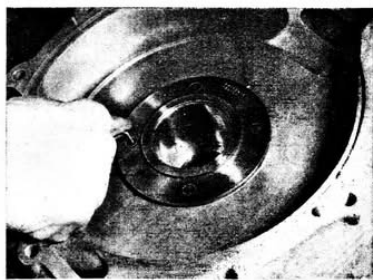
The problem of cam wear is under the microscope right now. The use of stellite for tappet faces is wearing out cams faster than Lacey—or anyone else for that matter—would like. Coppering the cams has helped but only partially. So Lacey's aim is to make cams and tappets of different materials, though which he doesn't know yet.

Testing for valve-gear wear can, of course, be expensive. Motor an engine on the Heenan and Froude, break a valve and the resulting fracas can add up to a damaged piston, bent connecting rod and other horrors besides.

So Bill is at present at work on a rig with which he can motor valve gear electrically. A straight shaft driven from a motor goes into the crankcase in place of the crankshaft. The head is then mounted above the crankcase on spacers, fed with oil and, presto, it can be run at



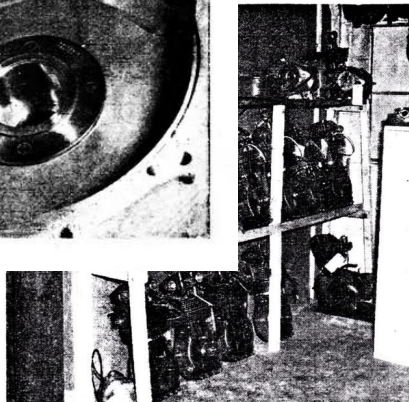
On the left you see the drive-side main-bearing housing Lacey fits to Manx Norton crankcases as a matter of routine. The bearing carries a 4in-diameter flange and is retained externally by a locking ring



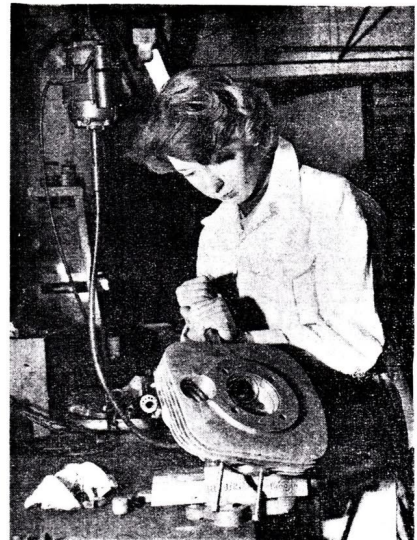
On the right the flange is shown in position. Four counter-sunk, socket-head screws inserted into the crankcase wall provide additional security. Note the high standard of finish

61

165



Above: Evidence of how work piles up on a successful tuner. Engines stacked against the wall include four of John Hartie's



Right: Do feminine hands achieve a better-than-masculine finish when handling power tools? Bill's daughter Ann is certainly a highly skilled operator

Below: Bill completes the assembly of a cam box—all cam boxes are dealt with by him and he checks each engine assembled by Ann before dispatch

The Norton experience

You probably first saw this masterpiece of shape and grace through the tint of plate glass, or in a magazine, maybe being handled by a friend or even worse by someone you don't know. Long before your eyes laid her you knew that somewhere, sometime you would meet for that never surpassed experience. Not for you the fussy, the temperamental, the Dresden touch or the big flashy bore. You wanted high fire with scintillating looks, superb performance capabilities, that could hold its own during the wildest inclinations. Of course she can also be easy and gentle like a

porting cat, as smooth in motion as silk on single snow—but only if you're man enough to move fast with her when you both get turned on. Most experiences are dulled by time and repetition. They become indistinguishable in a world of mediocre happenings. Only a few remain fresh and exciting as on the first encounter—admittedly they are a hard to acquire but well worth waiting for.

0-60 m.p.h. in 4.8 seconds. Standing quarter 12.6 secs. Top speed 105 m.p.h. plus.



The Norton Commando 750 Roaster with the isolastic super-ride



phenomenal revs. He won't have gas pressures to contend with, true, but he will be able to see what's going on. And, if a valve drops, it falls into a case empty but for the straight shaft.

To a greater extent than any other man I know, Lacey is the embodiment of every schoolboy's impression of a tuner. He is short and spare and has a slight stoop. His voice is quiet and well modulated. His greying hair is long, sweeping straight back from a high forehead to warm a vastly protruding "bump" at the back of his head. His spectacles are thick and horn-rimmed and the eyes that twinkle through them are keen, lively, inquisitive, perhaps, above all else.

To meet a man like that for the first time you'd be hard put to it to guess that at one time, as far back as 1928, Lacey covered 103 miles in an hour on a Grindley-Pearless J.A.P. at Brooklands, a feat that was to win him *The Motor Cycle* Trophy for the first rider to take the classic hour record at over 100 m.p.h. on a British track. Three years later he was to hoist the record to 110-and-a-bit on a Norton at Montlhéry. And less than a year before, doing spell and spell about with Wal Phillips, he had put 306 miles into three hours with the same Norton and on the same bowl.

Bill doesn't work alone. Now clocking on for 60, he shares his bench with an attractive—and how!—24-year-old redhead, his daughter, Ann. With the deft hands that once specialized in *la coiffure*, that white-boiler-suited lass now strips

and rebuilds Manx Norton engines, profiles and polishes ports with all her father's skill and meticulous attention to detail.

An operation goes like this. An engine comes in and is cleaned and stripped by Ann. Included in her part of the work is withdrawing the drive-side main bearing and housing in readiness for the modification described earlier. She then attends to the head, changing the valve guides, profiling and mirror-finishing the ports. Bill meanwhile strips, reassembles and balances the flywheel assembly and fetters the cam box. One of the other reassembles the engine, though Bill always times the valves and makes a final check. Then both work together when the engine is being tested on the brake.

Of course, it is alone responsible for a world's championship win. Just, in fact, as all the credit cannot go to the rider who ultimately takes the crown. The accolade goes jointly, and collectively, to the preparation team and rider together. Will it be earned by the Lacey-Hartie-Comerford set-up this year?

Hartie has never ridden better. Lacey has a lifetime of accumulated know-how and can be guaranteed to leave nothing to chance. Can there be a more formidable combination?

Norton P800 prototype stands as one of the most mysterious and ambitious experimental engines ever developed by Norton during the mid-1960s. At a time when the company was searching for a successor to its aging but beloved Dominator twins, Norton engineers explored several advanced multi-cylinder layouts. The P800 was their boldest attempt: an 800cc double overhead cam, air-cooled parallel-four designed to push the brand into modern high-performance territory. Although it never reached production, the P800 remains one of Norton's most fascinating "what-ifs."



At its core, the P800 used a DOHC, eight-valve cylinder head configuration — a dramatic step forward compared to Norton's traditional pushrod engines. Its design was heavily influenced by contemporary Grand Prix technology, borrowing ideas from Japanese multi-cylinders that were beginning to dominate racing. Norton hoped that the P800 would allow them to compete not only in the motorcycle market, but also in international racing categories where high-revving, multi-cylinder engines had become essential for success.

One of the most interesting features of the P800 was its compact engine layout. Norton engineers worked to keep the engine narrow despite its four-cylinder design, aiming to preserve the handling characteristics for which Norton motorcycles were famous. The gearbox and bottom end were also heavily re-engineered to handle higher rpm and power output than any Norton production engine of the time. Every part of the P800 reflected a serious attempt to leap into a new era of engineering.

However, the timing of the project worked against it. By 1965, Norton's parent company AMC was in deep financial trouble, unable to afford the tooling and development costs necessary to bring such an advanced engine into production. At the same time, Japanese manufacturers like Honda and Yamaha were accelerating at a pace that British factories could no longer match. As a result, the P800 project was cancelled before a functioning production-ready prototype could be fully developed, and only a small number of experimental components survive today.

Today, the Norton P800 DOHC prototype is regarded as a lost chapter in British motorcycle engineering. It represents a moment when Norton tried to break free of its traditional formulas and step into the future with a sophisticated, race-inspired design. Had it reached production, the P800 might have rewritten Norton's history and helped the company compete more effectively against the rising Japanese manufacturers. Instead, it survives as a rare glimpse of what Norton engineers were truly capable of during one of the company's most challenging eras.

From Julian Kowalewski

Bob Herman is actually putting one of his bikes up for sale

Believe it or not, I find myself overwhelmed with more project bikes than I can realistically address expediently. Ergo, I reluctantly conclude that I must let at least one project go back to the universe. I want to offer it to Norton Colorado members before releasing it to the general public, and would appreciate it if you would circulate this information through the normal channels.

The bike is a 1957 BSA A10 Road Rocket. It is essentially complete but disassembled. The chassis has been stripped for painting. The tinware has been professionally painted and looks nice, though there is a bit of shop wear (a few scratches) in the paint. The engine needs a rebuild, and the chassis needs a new swingarm spindle and bushings. Other than that, I do not know. I'm willing to pass it along, with the previous owner's signed title, at an attractive price.

Anyone wanting to discuss taking over stewardship of this iconic pre-unit BSA should call or email me.

719 458-7452 romomoto@gmail.com



Accident waiting to happen

Getting my wife a matching belt and bag for Christmas.

We'll have that vacuum cleaner working again in no time.

(Ed note: Guys, please don't try this at home if you prefer to stay married until next Christmas.)



We have club t-shirts and sweatshirts available to purchase again.

We're doing it very differently from how we used to do it. Jerry Doe has started a custom t-shirt business called "Classic Tees" and you can order shirts on-line

<https://classictees.us/classictees/norton-colorado-club/>



The shirts are very nice, good quality. I've been wanting a new club shirt for a long time. Thanks , Jerry.

So, is this the start of my modelling career??

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



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/>

Digital map lets you explore the Roman Empire's vast road network | New Scientist

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2503325-digital-map-lets-you-explore-the-roman-empires-vast-road-network/>

Motorcycle Lane Filtering: What You Need to Know



Seems Lady Godiva got tired of riding slowly through town in the nude, so she bought a Norton high rider! Perfect for riding side saddle at speed!



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

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

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 Ren
dezvous hosted by Steve Harris and Charley
Gremmels.

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

July 13, 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 14, 2025 (Sunday), English Motoring Conclave.

October 12, 2025 (Sunday), Plains Ride, hosted by Scott and Julie Robinson.

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

November 6, 2025 (Thursday) 1st Thurs day, Brooklyn's
Finest Pizza

November 8, 2025 (Saturday) Tech Day

December 4 2025 (Thursday) 1st Thursday, Brooklyn's
Finest Pizza

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.

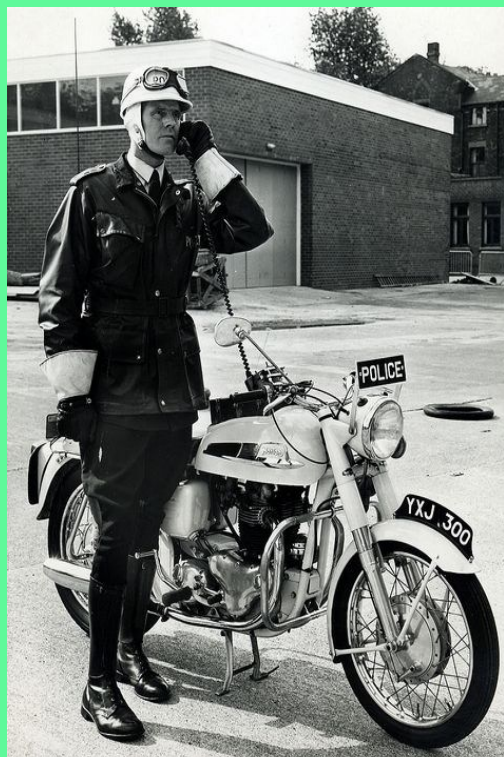
The official club membership list is posted on the club website. Please let Eric know if there is an error.

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/>



BRING OUT YOUR VINTAGE, EXOTIC, WEIRD,
CUSTOM, BOBBER, CHOPPER, CAFÉ, SCRAMBLER,
SCOOTER, BRITISH, EURO, JAPANESE, ANYTHING
WITH TWO WHEELS AND A MOTOR!



FIRST THURSDAY MOTO RALLY
Hosted by Norton Colorado

DECEMBER 4, 2025

ON THE PATIO OF BROOKLYN'S FINEST PIZZA

BIKES ON DISPLAY

SCREENING OF THE NORTON DRAG RACING DOCUMENTARY "HOGSLAYER" (6 P.M.)

MEET RIDERS, CLUBS AND ENTHUSIASTS

Join us all winter long – even when riding isn't an option.



176 S Broadway
Denver, CO
80209

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 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

