

Gateway Norton Owners News #3

"To Promote the Use and Pride of Norton Motorcycle Ownership"

February 2000

Compiled by J. Jump

EDITORIAL

What a relief it was to find out that the Y2K bug didn't affect my Boyer! As you all know we were blessed with temps in the '60s on January 1st and it was a perfect day for a ride. I regret that I spaced out the event at John Mosier's (EMU member) and missed out on a good time. Next time could somebody give me a call?

The big news in this edition is the results from the planning meeting. Although I'm writing this editorial prior to the meeting, I'm confident that it will have been a great success and we have a large and varied agenda for the coming year. There is an article with the details included within. Make sure to copy down the dates and call up the event coordinators to offer them a hand.

As of the last mailing we have 24 members on our roster. Some names fell off but we gained a few through word-of-mouth, our listing in the INOA's *Norton News*, and our new web page. Perhaps a few more names will be added to the roster from exposure at the Bike show. Of those 24 members, 12 have their dues paid until at least July 2000. So if you don't want to be dropped from the mailing list, please make an effort to pay your dues.

I have been in contact with a few other INOA chapters via E-mail, and have started to exchange newsletters with them. This has been marginally successful. I think perhaps they would prefer that we buy a membership to their clubs, thereby ensuring we get delivery and they don't go broke giving away newsletters. Presently I do not believe our treasury can support various and sundry memberships, most of which are in the \$20.00/yr. range (what do they do with all that money anyway?). Perhaps in the future.

One thing that has astonished me is the size of some of these clubs. I read that club meetings at the Twin Cities group can exceed a few hundred! Of course, their membership is opened up to all British marques, but still, is there anything close to that many old British bikes, being ridden on a regular basis around these parts? Why are there so few of us here? Perhaps the answer is that there are a lot of guys who still run the old brits, they just don't want to join a club. Better yet, perhaps they don't know we exist. All I have done is word of mouth promotion of our club, and I guess that's hardly enough. Maybe we should consider placing an add in the newspaper, or some flyers in shops around town. This topic will be discussed at the planning meeting, so look at the article to see what our direction is going to be.

I would like to thank the gentlemen who contributed to this issue of the GNOA News. Not only does it make my job easier, but it adds some diversity to my bureaucratic prose. I would like to encourage everyone to write up something to add to the newsletter from time to time. Please don't feel like you have nothing to contribute - we can all learn from your experiences. Whether it be a good substitute part, or a special maintenance technique, or a dealer that gave you a square deal, share your knowledge with us. Your efforts will be appreciated!

GNOA Web Page

Do we need a stinkin' web page? Perhaps we do. At any rate we have one! New GNOA member Ron Sutton has taken the liberty to establish a club webpage and has graciously submitted the following so we know what to do with it. Read on.....

Hello everybody,

My name is Ron Sutton; I'm a new member of the INOA and the GNOA. I have set up an e-mail list server for the GNOA. So, exactly what is a list server or e-mail list you ask? Good question, an e-mail list is a way for a group of people with like interests to keep in touch with each other. It's like a group discussion where you can join in at any time, if you have a question or want to respond to another person's question you can join in or you can just sit and listen and learn. Basically here's how it works.

There is an e-mail program that resides on an e-mail server, when the e-mail program receives an e-mail from a subscribed member of the group it sends that message to all subscribers of the list. Member of the group can then respond to the message and the e-mail program will distribute the reply to the entire group.

Now that we have that all cleared up, what can an e-mail list do for the GNOA? Let's say you have a question about your bike, like "How do I change the kunuter valve on my 74 Commando?" All you have to do is go to your computer and send an e-mail message to the List, which in turn sends it to the combined knowledge of all the members that are subscribed to the list. You may get an answers to your question from member "A" like "The kunuter valve on the 74 is hard to change, first you have to pull off the primary cover and remove the primary chain" Then member "B" replies "I changed the kunuter valve on my 74 by loosening it from underneath the engine without removing the primary cover and chain" You found out the easy way to change the kunuter valve along with member "B" and any other person that may have to change his kunuter valve in the future.

Here's another possibility. It's Wednesday evening and you find out that Aunt Martha decided to go to Florida instead of coming to your house for Sunday dinner. I know your broken hearted that your plans for Sunday have fallen through and you have all day to, oh lets say, ride your Norton. Rather than playing phone tag with a bunch of people trying to set up a ride for Sunday you can just send a message to the List saying "I can ride on Sunday, anybody want to go?" Anyone interested can reply. You can then set up a time and meeting place, all on the List.

So, how much does it cost? Well, that's the best part - it's free. You can subscribe or unsubscribe anytime night or day and as often as you want. Sound pretty good, don't it? Here's how to subscribe, send a blank e-mail to gnoa-subscribe@egroups.com. You will then receive a confirmation note, just hit the reply and send buttons on your e-mail program and it's a done deal. Or, you can go to <http://go.to/gnoa> and sign up on the web page. After you get signed up all you have to do to post to the List is send a message to gnoa@egroups.com.

See you on-line,
Ron Sutton
rsutton@usa.com

RUMOR CONTROL

Steve Moose suffered a third heart attack late in January, which required he undergo quad bypass surgery on February 14 (heart surgery on Valentines Day? Whataya tryin' to say, Steve?). I spoke with his wife Sherry on the 17th and she said the surgery was textbook & he's recovering well. He's still in ICU but plans to move to a step-down unit on the 19th, and go home on the 24th. I'm sure he'd appreciate a call because Sherry says he's pretty antsy. St. Mary's Medical Center, Jefferson City MO (573) 761-7000.

New Members, Kevin Budd, Ron Sutton, and Gary Hollowich were welcomed at the planning meeting. Kevin rides an E-start roadster, Ron a P-11A, and Gary recently picked up a '74 Interstate. Now if we can get Robin to bring out his Rotary and Marty his ES-2, the Norton marque would be well represented on a club ride. Know anybody with a Dommie?

Charlie Hillyer has completed a "Speed Restoration" of a '68 Commando, and does it look ZOOMY! Look for his article later in this issue.

RUMOR CONTROL (cont.)

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Bill Bluemel's Yellow Roadster is in the final phases of a complete nut-and-bolt rebuild being carried out by Mike French. After correcting the 3 inches of lateral slop at the rear wheel and replacing the flip-top pistons, look for Bill to be draggin' hard points on the late April group ride. We witness another Phoenix!

FIRST ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING FEB. 12

The first annual planning meeting was held on schedule at Mike French's house. We were blessed with good weather, which led to a turnout of approximately 20 folks, some of them new members. At about 1 PM the meeting was called to order.

After introductions and a round of applause to Mike for hosting our event, I announced that Steve Moose had suffered another heart attack and had undergone by-pass surgery this past week. I had no word on his condition at the time of the meeting.

I followed with a quick re-cap of the club and activities over the past 6 months

Two Newsletters issued

INOA recognized us as new chapter at National Rally

Quick Treasury report, request for dues payment

I announced that Steve Moose had contributed \$50.00 to the club as seed money, which I passed on to Mike to help defray the costs of food and refreshments. Not to be out done, Gary Creech responded with his own generous \$50 donation. Don't worry Gary, I won't be asking you for dues in the foreseeable future-you're paid up until July 2009!

The agenda shifted to Membership and ways to increase it. General consensus was that we had most of the interested Norton owners at the meeting so why spend a lot of effort turning over rocks. We decided to concentrate on increasing membership by:

- a) Placement of a couple flyers at Donnelson's and at Classic Marketing
- b) Word of Mouth
- c) Development of Web Page (POC: Ron Sutton - Send him pictures links, etc. Look at his article for e-mail address)

As always we are open to your ideas. If you have one, please speak up!

Our focus turned toward the Club Logo. Rob Overal (artist) was in attendance and presented three thumbnail sketches to the membership. Overwhelmingly, the sketch of the rear of a Fastback passing through the Arch was selected as the preferred logo. Some discussion followed about colors: red or yellow, black, silver, 3 or fewer colors. We decided to leave it in Rob's hands. Thanks for the help Rob-all the sketches were great, and we look forward to seeing the finished product in 2 to 3 weeks.

Activity planning got off to a slow start. Let me sum it up like this:

- a) Spring Group Ride-Late April sponsored by Tom Mitchell
- b) Norton Days-1st one scheduled for May 7th sponsored by Marty DuPree
Note: If anyone is interested in sponsoring another ride or Norton Day in the future, please let me or Ron Sutton or somebody know. We all would appreciate your efforts!
- c) Rallies - The HoAME Rally is going to be May 19, 20 & 21 at Clinton Lake in Lawrence Kansas, it's about 20 miles west of Kansas City on I-70. The cost is \$20 (Pre-registration) per immediate family. Mel Heffron would like to organize a group ride of GNOA members to attend the rally. Call him @(618) 466-5487

Lake of the Pines Rally-sponsored by North Texas Norton Owners- Their web page shows high attendance by all European marques. In 1999 it was held Friday through Sunday, October 1, 2, & 3,

1999. If anyone is planning on attending this rally, we need a volunteer to investigate further and report back to the club with the info.

Other Ideas - Speed runs/rendezvous with another chapter (Chicago, Kentucky, Ton-Up Boys, Nashville) Interesting concept that sounds like fun. Some of us could plan a run up to Chicago to attend one of their monthly meetings. I've talked to the To-Up Boys in Nashville-they have an annual party with Sonny Collier and I think they time it with a show held at their Union Station. Charlie Hillyer talked about the idea of co-hosting a regional rally with Chicago or the Kentucky chapter (Louisville). I think he is going to do some investigating into these ideas. We are looking for volunteers to help out, mostly just be willing to come along. Speak up and be heard!

We ended the meeting with a discussion about fund raising. I proposed the idea that we might consider selling our club T-shirt through the INOA. I have already discussed it with the Norton News editor (Barry Armatage) and there should be no problems with buying a small add (\$30 1/4 page: \$15 for 1/8 page). I have talked to a couple of printers and I think we could produce a decent shirt in limited numbers for under \$11.00 each, perhaps less. If the artwork is good (pretty much a sure thing with Rob), I think they could sell pretty good at \$15 each. We aren't limited to T-shirts either; bandanas, shop towels, hats, embroidered patches, beer mugs, etc, are all within scope. I will take on this effort, but would welcome any assistance from anyone with experience in this arena. Or if someone knows somebody in the business that would be willing to work with us PLEASE let me know.

So to sum it up, we have a couple of activities scheduled; a day ride in late April, a Norton Day for May 7th, and a rally ride for May 19-21 in Lawrence Kansas. Our club logo is well on it's way to becoming a reality, we will be creating a club banner to display at events we attend, all members are responsible for recruiting new members, and we might try selling GNOA paraphernalia through the INOA newsletter, or anywhere else for that matter. I want to extend a great big " Thank You" to Mike and his family for hosting our meeting, and to those who volunteered to sponsor future activities for the club. Let's repay them by carrying on the spirit, by volunteering to sponsor other events throughout the season.

TECHNICAL:

SOME TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS FOR BOYER IGNITIONS

There are many positives to changing to an electronic ignition on a Norton. But one of the negatives is, since they are generally so reliable (if correctly installed), that we tend to just forget about them. And since their failure rate is so low, we don't get much experience troubleshooting them. In addition, there doesn't seem to be much information available on how to test them if we suspect they may be causing problems. Here are the answers to some questions, with a little history to boot.

The Boyer Bransden Co. is a small concern supplying ignition systems not only for motorcycles, but also for all sorts of pumps, motors, lawnmowers, etc. Yes, indeed, there was Mark I and Mark II Boyers back in the late 60's. The Mark I was the first model, and was fitted to racing Triumphs in the late 60's. It was considerably bigger than the present units, the black box being about 4" by 5". Then came the Mark II unit, which must have been very small and compact, as the whole unit fit inside the points housing of a Triumph. This approach was dropped, possibly because of heat and stability problems, and the Mark III unit was the result. The early Mark III units were different for the Norton. Because of starting problems on the Norton (kickback), the current to the coils remained off until it was turned on by a trigger from the pulser coils when the engine was turned over. It would then turn back off in a second or two if no further pulses were received. The older BSA-Triumph unit, on the other hand, had current to the coils as soon as the ignition switch was turned on. The later Mark III units are all the same; they

Battery voltage should not be less than 9 volts. A low battery charge can cause the ignition to produce a spark on switching the lights on or using the horn. A bad battery cell can also cause a continuous stream of sparks to occur.

Bad connections anywhere in circuit. Bad connections increase resistance, thereby reducing current. A simple way to check is to eliminate all the wiring, switches and connectors in the 12v supply to the box. Take a piece of wire and connect it between the (-) negative side of the battery and the white lead to the box. This will eliminate the ignition switch, the kill switch and any other connectors in this line. If this solves your problem, and you now have a spark when the engine is turned over, you have a bad ignition switch, a bad kill switch or a bad connection. Good reason to carry a 3-ft long piece of 14 gage primary wire in your tool pouch!

With this same piece of wire, you can test your coils and plugs. Simply disconnect the black wire from the box to the coils and then, with one end of the wire connected to the battery (-) negative terminal, touch the other end to the (-) negative coil terminal. When you break this connection, you should see a spark at the plugs if your coils are good. If this does not produce a spark, check the coil wiring and the connections from the frame ground back to the (+) coil terminal. If all connections are OK then you probably have a bad or open coil.

No current through the coils could also be caused by:

- No earth to the red wire from the box

- Link wire between coils open

- The black wire from the box shorting to ground, or one of the coils shorting internally (black box will be very hot).

Step 2: If all is well so far, then continue with the following:

A simple test of the transistor box can be made with the box still in the circuit by disconnecting the yellow/black and the white/black wires at the pickup in the points cavity. With the ignition on they can be touched together and broken. This should produce a spark at the plugs. If it does not (given all items in step 1 check ok), the box is faulty, or the wires leading down to the points cavity have an open. If it does cause a spark, that indicates a problem at the pick-up.

OK, we're down to the black box or open wire-I suggest you should suspect the wire first. When I installed mine I used the existing harness that connected the points to the coils. After 30 years worth of temperature cycles, ten gazillion vibration cycles (not to mention all the wiggling & wrestling the harness experienced being jammed through the timing side crankcase over those years), it's easy to envision cracked insulation and/or broken/corroded conductors. Once again, your stash of primary wire can bail you out.

I had an intermittent problem show up in this area that kept the bike from running above 4500 rpm. The pickup plate has a small wire tie acting as a strain relief for the two leads emerging from the board. After removing the board and sniping the wire tie I noticed the insulation on one of the leads was split open. A careful inspection revealed that almost all the conductors inside that wire were broken at the split. This seems to be an area that fails on a lot Boyers because I've had a few folks tell me they had the same experience. Perhaps an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. As preventative maintenance, I would recommend a one-time visual inspection of these leads to check for splits in the insulation or broken conductors, especially in the area of the wire tie. If you find a problem like I did, a new wire can be easily

remain off until triggered on, and then they will turn back off in a second or two if no further pulses are received. This is what they call a "soft turn off": it doesn't produce a spark at the plugs, it just turns off the current to the coils. A good idea, if the key were left on. All of the Boyer units produced in the last few years are of this type.

All units have the same basic-advance curve, which is controlled by the trigger pulses. I'm not going to get into the theory of how the advance is produced, but you will notice when you put a strobe light on the bike during installation of your Boyer that the unit keeps on advancing with increasing RPM, unlike the mechanical advance unit you are replacing. The mechanical advance unit has reached its full advance by about 3000 RPM, whereas you time the Boyer at 5000 RPM. This is not a problem, only a difference between the two systems and how the advance is produced. And remember, that mechanical advance unit was the Achilles' heel of many a British bike.

Now that we know a little more about how they work, we can talk about how to check them out if we suspect they may be faulty. The first thing you must do is to forget about what's inside the little black box. It doesn't matter. That little black box does only two things: it turns the current to the coils on and off, just the same as the points did in your old system, and it provides spark advance. That's its only job. If it stops doing that, it's bad.

Most of the problems encountered with Boyer units are the result of bad connections. Every connector must be clean and tight. I solder them after ensuring a tight mechanical connection. Don't rely on solder to make a good electrical connection. A solid crimp does more for reducing resistance in a connection, the solder just holds things in place. Remember, every connection is critical, even the ground connections. So if you encounter problems, first, take a good look at all of the connections to make sure they are still in place.

There are only five little wires going into the Boyer unit (black box); two are used for the trigger circuit, white is the 12v supply, red is ground, and the black is the switched 12v to the coils. Pretty simple. But the power in the white lead goes through a bunch of connections getting from the negative side of the battery to the Boyer unit. This wire must be capable of carrying between 3 and 4 amps of current. A bad cell in your battery or a bad connection anywhere along this path can cause you problems.

In order to understand why a bad connector has such an adverse effect on the circuit, take a look at a schematic of your typical Norton. Notice that the only resistance in the path from the negative battery terminal, through the ignition switch, the kill switch, the black box, the coils, and back to chassis ground is the resistance of the coils themselves. Each 6v coil has only about 1.5 to 2 OHMS, so the total resistance should be 3 to 4 OHMS. Remembering that $I=E/R$, this is where we come up with 3 to 4 amps. Put a few extra OHMS in there due to bad connections and you can see what happens. Enough about connectors, I'm sure you got the point by now. Let's get on with some troubleshooting.

The system is set up to fire both plugs simultaneously. If only one side is hitting, the problem probably lies with a plug wire, a plug, or some other system, not the Boyer. You can swap wires and plugs from side to side to narrow that down. If you have compression and fuel and it still won't run, pull one of the spark plugs or one of the plug leads and connect it to a spare plug. Hold the plug against the head while you or someone else turns the engine over. You should see a spark at the plug. No spark indicates a deeper problem.

Step 1: Check the power supply to the box. The voltage to white wire leading into the black box should be 9 volts min. Possible causes of low/no voltage:

Lack of voltage due to a blown fuse. If the fuse is blown you might check for shorts to ground at other places on the harness. This happened to me once. Bike ran fine until I pulled on the front brake at idle, then it would die. Started back up with the charge in the capacitor (lights turned off), but no charge indicated on the ammeter because the fuse was blown. Problem was isolated to the front brake light switch shorting onto the lower triple clamp. Wrapped it with tape and no more problems.

same, old, blue-collar bullshit as it was back in your day. You don't sell bikes in the 90's with racing success! You sell a lifestyle and an image. One that we plan to market to people whom are tired of the dirtball Harleys and the cookie cutter jap bikes. So, if you don't support what we're doing, then stay on your leaky, old Commando and kiss my ass!

Kurt M. Schultz
CIO, Norton Motorcycles

As I understand it, now even this guy has left the sinking ship of NMI. So Much for a New Norton!

MEMBERS RIDES: BARNEY submitted by Charlie Hillyer

For some unknown reason, I got the urge to get another Norton, one that I could do some serious learning on. My previous 4 other Nortons were all purchased either new (1970) or in generally good shape. My '73 is still in good shape, certainly not rough enough to warrant tearing down to the frame and rebuilding, so I scouted out another machine to destroy with my talents.

I found an add in Hemmings Motor News listing a 74 Commando, an old Indian (with chair), and a '69 Commando. The Indian was nice, but carried a price tag of \$19k, which broke any urges I had for that. The '74 was real nice too, but I already had a nice one. It was so nice I told my cousin about it and he ended up buying it. That left the '69 for my endeavors.

Upon closer inspection, it really was a '68 model (20M3) first registered in '69. The serial # (127982) identifies it as one of the first 2000 Commandos built. It still bore the gusseted steering head, of which several articles have been written about describing the certain death to befall anyone who rode one in that condition. Surprisingly, the odometer read 18k+ miles so I guess Allah must have smiled on the previous owners. Knowing my luck falls somewhere between Bad & None, the frame would require a re-do to prevent me from suffering that inevitable fate (given I ever got it to run). The previous owner had every intention of fixing it up when he bought it 9 years earlier. However, his job moves never allowed him enough time to get started. He purchased the bike from a guy who hand grenaded the transmission doing "A Giant Burn-out". The bike appeared to be very nearly complete and original, meaning (1) it wasn't totally butchered, and (2) what was there was either worn out, rusted, or both. I summized it would be too expensive to do a full restoration on the machine, too expensive for even the minimal amount of repair and replacement just to make it a runner. So of course I did the obvious: I bought it anyway! So what if it cost a bunch to get going. The kids would just have to wait until next year to get any Christmas presents!!

Before getting started, I marshaled up every cardboard box, Glad Bag, Tie Wrap, and label I could find to keep all the pieces clean, identified, and sorted. Even with these organizational efforts, I still ended up with 90% of the parts on the floor, on shelves, or in a pile on the floor, which left me mystified when I came back and tried to figure out what they were or where they came from.

I had a lot of fun during the tear down, being truly amazed that Norton seemed to have hired engineers who were better suited at being restroom attendants or bell boys at a London hotel. There must have been a dozen times I said to myself "Why didn't they do it this way?".

The frame went of to Ft. Scott KS to remove the "Death Gusset" and to have the swing arm gusseted. The Guy did a stellar job installing the small tube that runs under the main tube. I defy anyone to see any sign that this is not a stock frame.

Naturally the rear isolastics needed to come out. Consider yourself fortunate if you have never seen the original production rear isolastic bushing. These were bonded to the center tube and to a steel bushing around the outside of the rubber, then pressed into the engine cradle. Rather than doing it the easy way (taking the cradle to someone who had a press), I drilled through the rubber bushing a number of times until I could pry out the center bushing. Then I chopped, cut, and eventually burned out the remaining rubber (stink-O!) to get to the steel outer

soldered in place. I also replaced the bullet connectors with mini spade connectors, ones small enough to pass through the drillway in the timing side cover. It's helpful to stagger the lengths of the leads so only one connector has to pass through the hole at once.

Another check in the triggering circuit is to make sure that the magnet behind the pick-up plate is turning. Don't laugh, I heard of it happening once when the bolt holding it in the cam came loose.

In conclusion, let me say this about working with electronic circuits. If the circuit fails, it is usually fairly easy to find the trouble. The tests above will probably be sufficient to identify your problem. In practice, however, life is seldom so simple. Most of the time the problem comes and goes intermittently and can be very difficult to identify. Don't loose your cool - stick with it. And don't forget that piece of primary wire in the tool pouch. If you just can't find the problem there are still three choices; 1) Buy a new Boyer unit; 2) Stick the points system back in; 3) Dynamite.

Big stir out of NMI

Below are a couple of letters taken from the Brit Iron list, written to the folks at Norton Motorcycles Inc., and a response from their CIO (Chief Information Officer?)

Dear Sirs,

Excerpt from Norton's web site: "We're sure you've heard all the rumors and speculation about the demise of the Nemesis and the Nirvana. Well it's true. Some of you will cheer and some of you will jeer, but those two bikes just weren't Nortons. The Nemesis turned out to be an overpriced crotch rocket and the Nirvana was just another "me too" cruiser. After many months of toiling, we have decided to get back to basics. Our new product line will be about what made Norton famous; lifestyle. And we're sure you'll agree that these bikes are much more representative of the Brand."

After reading the preceding announcement, it was immediately apparent to me that whomever is responsible for the resurrection of the Norton brand have never actually ridden a Norton. When I think of Norton the first thing that comes to mind as a Manx Norton racer, flying down a chicane during the Isle of Mann. I don't even know what a lifestyle bike is. I don't need a bike to "create" an image of a lifestyle for me. My lifestyle is one that appreciates the beauty found in design simplicity, beautiful functional lines. Classic form. What has allowed Triumph to enjoy renewed success has be the combination of classic looks and new technology. Norton should follow suit. Imagine the progression that would have happened had the brand remained in production all of these years. Then see where you would have been. Like the Ford Mustang, every reincarnation has a link to the past. Norton's history is based in the creation of motorcycles for motorcyclists. Fantastic machines like the Commando, Dommie and Atlas, were some of the best motorcycles ever built. Build us a bike that captures some of the magic Norton was built on. Build us a bike worthy of the Norton name. I have cc'd copies of this letter to other Norton lovers, and request that they also write you and voice their opinion.

The following is another Norton owner's response to the press release

Are you joking? Do you know *anything* about the history of Norton? Lifestyle is what made Harley Davidson famous. RACING SUCCESS is what made Norton famous. Racing success and only racing success. Since the beginning of the century, while Triumph was selling mediocre motorcycles to average people who just needed transportation Norton was focused on building race bikes and race-oriented street bikes There has never been a "Norton Lifestyle". You guys are just another pathetic group of money-grubbers trying to cash in on the Harley money machine. If you really want to revive what made Norton famous, design and build a race bike and go win some races. Lifestyle. Heh. James Lansdowne Norton is spinning in his grave

And the reply from NMI.....

From: "Kurt Schultz" <kurt@photobykurt.com>

Take the giant leap OUT of the 70's and get a clue! Would you rather we spend our \$20 million on reviving a dead brand and producing motorcycles again, or should we spend it on a racing program? TODAY, asshole, it is all about lifestyle. Nobody is going to come out of the woodwork and beat the japs on the track with a new bike. They have tens of millions of dollars to blow on racing, WE DON'T. We may not know the history of Norton like you do, sir, but we know the old "win on Sunday, sell on Monday" saying is the

units around in those colors already. Besides, people would only compare my bike to like units, and I can't stand the rejection. "No," I says to myself, "plenty of people think you're weird, so by golly, ACT WIERD!" I do have a reputation to uphold, you know. So, eschewing what little common sense I have remaining, I opted for **PURPLE** (not a misprint). The kids decide they will name it Barney (like the dinosaur). Off goes the bodywork to the best (read only) paint and body man in the metropolis of Cuba (MO). He has a reputation of doing at least average work, so he fits right into my comfort level, not to mention price range. I just didn't want to go shopping around St. Louis looking for someone else. Sometime down the road I can always re-do it-all it takes is money! Sure enough, I picked the pieces up the other day, and there are enough dirt flecks in the paint to build pitchers' mound at Busch Stadium. Hopefully I'll be able to buff some of them out.

Now I'm waiting for an exhaust system and a 3.25 x 19 front tire to arrive, which I ordered from Walldridge in Canada. Most of the \$kajillion dollars I've spent for parts & stuff went to them and I have been real satisfied. The prices seem to be lower on almost everything when I compare with British Only and others. Shipping does take a few days longer though.

My next tasks will be to modify the center stand and side stand, as for some reason he doesn't sit very well. It barely gets off the ground on the center stand, and leans waaaaay over on the side stand. I'm hoping the smaller front tire will help at least a little. Probably need to search out a welder to make something longer. The wheels and spokes should probably get replaced too, once all the other junk is done.

I'm looking forward to the first time other club members can see Barney, criticize, laugh, berate, browbeat-I don't care! I've had fun, learned a lot, and had an excuse not to visit my mother-in-law...what more could you ask for????

TREASURY REPORT

Balance (11/02/99)	\$ 33.89
Money taken in (dues/donations)	\$ 166.00
Money Spent (Envelopes, stamps, post cards)	<u>\$ 94.00</u>
Balance (02/17/00)	\$ 105.89

JOKE OF THE MONTH (No-Not the above Treasury Report!!)

A little old lady had always wanted to join a local biker club. One day she goes up and knocks on the door. A big, hairy, bearded biker with tattoos all over his arms answers.

She proclaims, "I want to join your club."

The guy was amused, but says she needs to meet certain biker requirements in order to join. The biker asks, "Do you have a motorcycle?"

The little old lady replies, "Yep... my bike's parked over there", and points to a Harley in the driveway.

The biker asks, "Do you drink?"

The little old lady replies, "Yep... drink like a fish. I'll drink any man in your club under the table."

The biker asks, "Do you smoke?"

The little old lady replies, "Yep... smoke like a chimney. At least 4 packs of cigarettes a day and a couple of cigars in the evening, while I'm shooting pool."

The biker is very impressed and asks, "Well... have you ever been picked up by the Fuzz?"

The little old lady thinks for a minute and says, "Nope...but I've been swung around by my nipples a few times."

sleeve. Finally, using a hacksaw at 45 swpm (swear words per min) I got through the sleeve, then I punched and pried until the sleeve came out of the cradle. Gee, that only took me two hours per side!!

I hemmed and hawed about painting the frame myself, but I eventually decided to have it powder coated. Heck, it's only the kids' college fund we're talking here! Ah, but then, what color? Since I knew I didn't have the time, talent, or money to do a true "Restoration" I decided I would personalize this bike. I decided to do the frame in silver, similar to the Commando prototype when first displayed at the Earls Court Show in '67. The guy I used for the powder coating works out of his garage. He also does custom paint jobs (mostly Harleys), and the ones I saw were pretty awesome, however their price is pretty awesome too!

While the frame was gone, I got busy on sanding, scraping, & derusting what was salvageable, and replacing the rest. When I tore into the gearbox I came to 2 conclusions:

- a) Rebuilding this gearbox would cost as much, if not more, than a good used one.
- b) If I decided to rebuild it, I would end up with a tranny rebuilt my ME! (scary)

I had Baxter put one together for me: can't wait to see if it works!

When I go to pick up my powder coated frame, well surprise surprise: major brain fade! Seems my man got in some other work, and my frame got thrown in with the lot. Abra Kadabra: My silver frame looked suspiciously black. I said "How long will it take you sandblast it back down and re do it right?" He said "How familiar are you with the term Major Discount?" Well, seeing that I was within a hair's breadth of doing it black in the first place, I was very receptive to him whacking the price, and me being on my merry way.

After reaming out a few powder coated holes, I started to glue things back together. I was pretty paranoid about nicks and such on that nice powder coat, so for once I actually paid attention to what I was doing and was careful (still got one big scratch). The motor had been removed complete, and I dropped it back in the same way. It had at least some compression, and I still wanted to know if it actually ran. I figured I could always jerk it back out later for more practice. The front forks were drained and inspected and appeared to be serviceable for now. Replaced the steering head bearings with the original loose ball bearing type (please don't preach).

It was now time to see if I had a decent motor or a decent boat anchor bolted in the frame. Recall that the early Commando has its points installed at the rear of the motor, not in the timing cover. They looked ok so they stayed put. Next up-carbs. Tore them apart on my desk and found the slides are pretty well toasted. However, I thought they may at least function enough to discover if the engine would run. I changed the needle jets and needles, as I had a spare set lying about. If you have never seen a worn out needle jet side-by-side with a new one, let me tell you, it's a real eye opener. It's hard to believe they can wear so much!

I re-used the original wiring harness and to my amazement, all the wires actually ended up connected somewhere! Why didn't I put in a new harness while I had it all apart? I figured the early model is pretty basic, so that could be done later when I knew it ran, and when my ever-expanding credit account told me I could. The gas and oil tanks went back on without the benefit of new paint: I wasn't about to shoot them without first knowing I had a runner. I primed the motor with 10-40 oil for start-up, figuring it would do a better job of shagging up any 9-year-old oil still left in the bottom end. Now it was ready!

Tickle the carbs, 5 or 6 kicks...**HUZZAH!! It Breathes!!** Run it for 15 seconds, shut it off. Check for gas and oil leaks. Ensure oil is pumping back to the tank. Fire it up again, run for 30 seconds, shut it down, do the same drill (small leak at gas tap only problem). Finally I start it, leaving it running for about 5 minutes, gently rolling the throttle in and out. The idle wouldn't go below 2000 rpm. I found out later that the Magura throttle wouldn't allow the slides to return sufficiently. The old beat up exhaust system is now spitting out enough rust to rebuild a Chevette from the ground up. I shut it down and did a quick plug check, hoping it isn't too lean. A rich mixture I can deal with, melted pistons are another story. By now I am satisfied/confident/optimistic/stupid enough (pick one) to yard out the oil tank, pull off the gas tank, and get some paint squirted on them.

Since this was not to be a true restoration project, for better or for worse, I was not going with a stock factory color. Not only were there just 3 colors available for the 1968 models, there is also an adequate number of

THIS ISSUE'S HISTORY LESSON

Here are some 1975 list prices for you to gawk at:

Honda GL1000	\$2895	BMW R90/6	\$3395
Suzuki GT750M	\$2145	Moto Guzzi 850T	\$2699
Kawasaki Z1B	\$2475	Norton 850	\$2895
Suzuki RE5	\$2475	Harley-Davidson FLH1200	\$3555

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring Group Ride-Late April sponsored by Tom Mitchell

Norton Days-1st one scheduled for May 7th sponsored by Marty DuPree

The HoAME Rally May 19, 20 & 21 at Clinton Lake in Lawrence Kansas, about 20 miles west of Kansas City on I-70. The cost is \$20 (Pre-registration) per immediate family. Mel Heffron would like to organize a group ride of GNOA members to attend the rally. Call him @ (618) 466-5487

FLEA MARKET A free service to members in good standing, or to those who have a bunch of good stuff we all want! Send me a note and I'll put it in here for as long as you want. Give your club mates first stab at your stash!**For Sale:** Pair of Stainless Pea Shooters New, Never Used, \$150.00. MikeFrench@

For Sale: A bunch of '71 BSA Firebird Scrambler bits left over from a chop. Front wheel complete with TLS brake, rear WM-3x18 Jones rim, rear fender, and some other bits. Come and get it! Trades for Norton or Guzzi junk accepted? Joe Jump (314) 909-0712.

