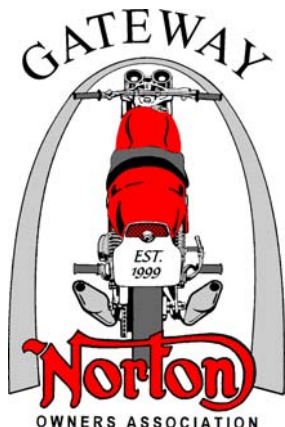


Gateway Norton Owners News #55



"To Promote the Use and Pride of Norton Motorcycle Ownership" December 2013



KING'S COLUMN

Hi all! I hear Santa comin and I am not quite ready. I retired a few weeks ago from working on motorcycles and now enjoy working on motorcycles, which reminds me of a pet peeve I have...Dirty,Stinkin,motorcycles.

At Motorrad of St. Louis,seemed like 80% of every bike I pulled on the bench was just filthy greasy never washed neglected bikes. Very few owners ever took the time to blast-off the grunge.It reminded me of working on 4-wheelers in Wentzville ,they too were covered in mud and sometimes pig/cowshit. What gives? Are these the same people that dont brush their teeth before going to the dentist? Cleanliness is next to Godliness, (just made that up) For Petes sake, Clean your Motorcycle every now and then. You will be able to see more problems and the guy that works on it (You?) will greatly appreciate it.

I took in a poor Triumph for a friend and it was impossible to touch it without getting dirty, or guessing what was under that layer of road grunge. It was too chilly to take it up front and clean it,but managed 2 weeks ago during a warm-up.I couldnt take it anymore,I felt sorry for the poor thing, and afterwards, found alot of small things needing attention...I.E.: bolts missing,loose,bent brackets, and I could tell what color some of the wires were!

I just Love working on some of the members bikes and sure appreciate the business,but have a heart...stop at the car wash before bringing it over. One of our newest members John McClure dropped of his Commando in Oct. and it was a pleasure to work on a rather spotless Norton. (Of course Nortons are 10X better and easier to live with than a Triumph) Most of our members keep a pretty sharp-looking motorbike by the way... Moral of the story? Clean it! Tell your friends... Get down in the

deep areas where all the grunge lives,down in the
cradle,centerstand,take off the seat,side covers,take some simple green
with you,or whatever suits you. It may not restart when you are done,so
this gives you a great time to park it in the [sun](#) and dry-off the plug
wires and look your investment over. You may find problems or see a "so
thats what that looks like." If you dont give a Damn about your bike
your mechanic wont either. Your bike is a reflection on your
character.Dont you love it when someone compliments on your bike?
Merry [Christmas](#) and hope to see everyone at the Corner bar sometime
in Feb.

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Dues are \$5 per year running July thru June. They are non-prorated to keep bookkeeping simple.
Make check payable to "Steve Hurst" or send cash to Steve at: 966 Weybridge Ct. W. St. Charles,
MO 63304.

New Member Mike Shane's Bio

If you've been on my FB Page, I should need no introduction. But I will fill in the details anyways. I am really excited to find other Norton Owners around.

I am a retired Army helicopter pilot. I am now flying helicopters in Poplar bluff for AR Evac. I fly to St. Louis almost daily.

I am the original owner of a 1974 Norton 850 Commando. I bought it when I was 18 in Huntington Beach CA. When I joined the army, I took it with me to Fort ORD Ca for 3 years. I made a Café Racer out of it with clip ons and dunstall exhausts. I took the mirrors and turn signals off. I rode hard all over CA including Big Sur Highway. When I was transferred to Fort Lewis WA, I took it back to my parent's house in Huntington Beach. Seattle/Tacoma was no place to have a motorcycle due to the weather. My parents kept it in their garage for 33 years. I am so lucky that they didn't get rid of it. I continued my Army career for

the next 17 years and never settled down enough to bring my motorcycle back. I really missed my Norton and felt bad about imposing on my parents like that. I couldn't figure out how to get it back.

In my travels, I picked up an antique singer sewing machine in working order. My sister wanted the Singer and I jokingly said I would trade it for the Norton. She scooped up the motorcycle in 2010 and drove it to Missouri. She wanted the Singer bad. I finally got my Norton back.

Although the bike looked bad, it started after 33 years on the 4th kick (after fresh battery, plugs, and gas). It took another 2 years and \$2000 before I could ride it on the street. I didn't have the tools to get it running, and it was hard to find a shop to touch it. I finally found a starving mechanic who would give it a shot.

It has been running for about 2 years now. It is the only Norton in town. I am looking forward to just hanging out with yu guys and learning a few things. Hope to see you soon. I am so tired of Harley Guys.

Mike Shane

259 Autumn Breeze

Poplar Bluff MO 63901

I tried to restore it back to its original condition. I like the mirrors and turn signals now. I had to put a Mikuni carb and electronic ignition on it to get it running though. Couldn't handle those amals and coils.



The following articles were contributed by Dale Knaus
He's not sure if the first one was published in an earlier newsletter or not. But hey, let
your Alzheimers kick in and enjoy it for the first time again.

Norton Commando Rebuild 2011. By Dale Knaus

As most of you know, my pride and joy is a pretty stock 1975 Norton Commando Roadster that I purchased from past member Bill Henderson in 2001. It's been a very enjoyable and reliable motorcycle, (except for that little problem with the transmission layshaft bearing several years ago.)

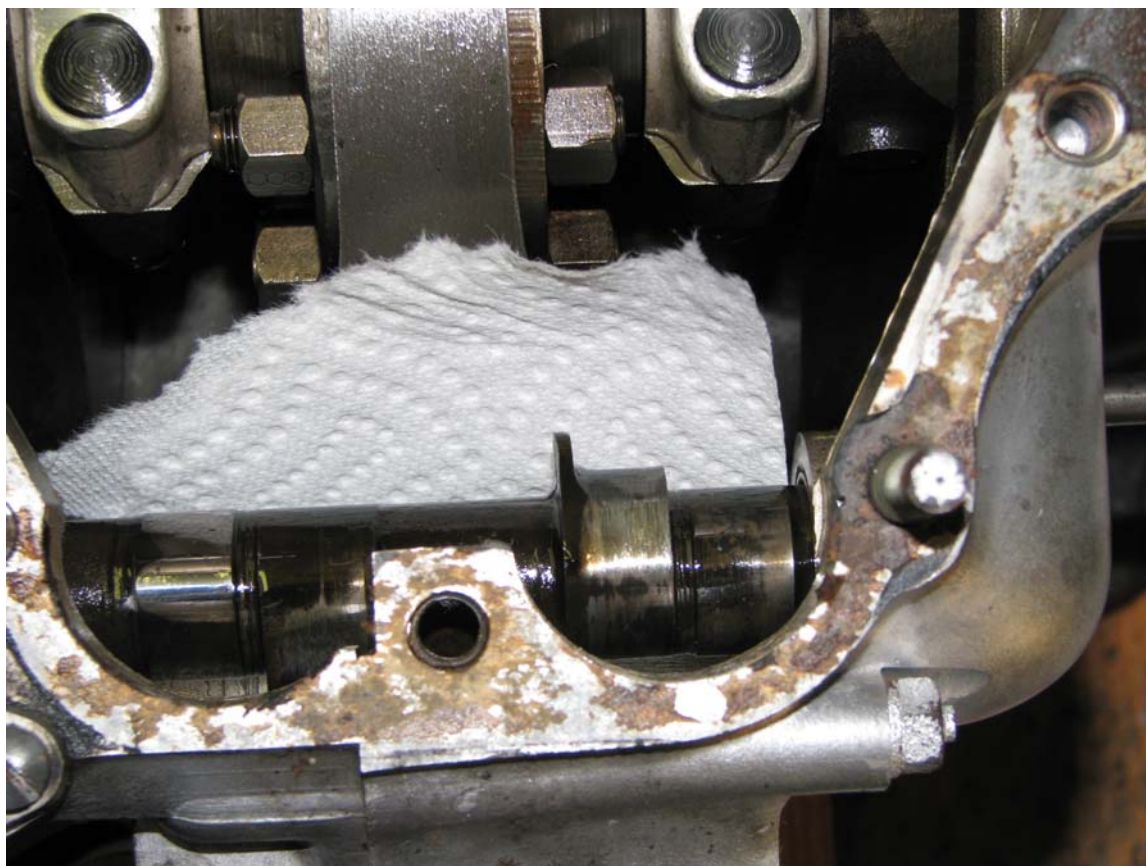
Well, the Mark III had been getting a little tired lately, it seemed down on power and running a little rough, and not starting on the first kick like it used to. I regularly take it to Columbia Missouri, a 200 mile round trip, and in that mileage it goes from the full mark on the oil dipstick to the add mark, about $\frac{1}{2}$ quart. Some of it is leaking, some burning. I had been thinking of tearing it down for a rebuild, but being currently between jobs I figured sure as soon as I got it spread all over the garage someone would want to employ me, probably out of state, and I'd be moving the proverbial basket case.

Well, on July 9, I took the 850 up the river road to Hannibal, and rode around a while. Coming home, the odometer hit 35,000 miles. Cool, me thinks. Just 17 miles later, the speedometer drive gearbox on the rear axle puked it's guts out, and the speedo quit working. Hmmm. A bad omen, maybe?

I gassed up in New London, and hit highway 61 to come home. I decided to get on it for a change, usually I don't ride the bike very hard, and I discovered it ran out of steam at about 5,000 RPM! She would hardly climb above that limit in any gear. During a long, long distance phone call to King Mike French, I learned the low power was one symptom of a flat cam. Hmmm. A lot of research on the subject, and it seems a lot of Mk III cams were flat at 12,000 miles. My bike had more than twice that mileage. Hmmm again. Well, putting it all together, it seemed like a good time to consider the rebuild.

As luck would have it, the following Friday I got a rejection notice from the Kansas based company I had interviewed with, and Saturday I started teardown on the old Norton.

Insert picture of cam:



That little remnant of a cam lobe is still the original intake cam profile, giving some idea of how much was worn off. The cam tappets were pretty worn too, as you can imagine.

Surprisingly, the bike had not been bored. In fact, other than the cam and tappets, and the rings on the right cylinder worn out, it was in pretty good shape! It showed no signs of ever having been apart before.

I'm going to reassemble with a new cam and followers, and new piston rings. It also needed new intake valve seals and we put new exhaust valves in. The cylinders got honed and the original pistons are cleaned up for reuse.

After staring at all the parts, I decided to paint the engine before reassembly, and that's the phase I'm in now. Next month I hope to report on progress, if there is any. By the way, I got a job offer (and accepted) the day after I split the cases, so work is progressing slowly.

-Dale

Learnings from 850 Norton Commando Mark III overhaul, and other stuff.

Note that most of the following relates only to the 1975 model Mark III.

- 1 Oil pump relief valve: Either the oil pump relief valve didn't have a spacer under the spring or I lost it during the overhaul. Upon reassembly, the spring and piston was not tight, and rattled when shook. This may result in the valve relieving at a lower than design pressure, and I may not have enough oil pressure at idle.
- 2 Taming the Isolastics : I replaced the front isolastic support when I first got the bike and replaced the cracked exhaust pipes with new header pipes. I replaced the rear isolastic when the transmission was out for a rebuild after the infamous bearing failure (they all do it). From the time I acquired it, the bike was a paint shaker up to 3K RPM, and dead smooth from 3K on up, like someone threw a switch. Below 3K it was terrible, with extreme vibration. When doing the overhaul, I noted the head- steady springs were preloaded to less than 1" length. The book called for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ ". I put the preload on it close to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " upon reassembly, and it is dead smooth from 2K on up. A BIG improvement.
- 3 The bike used a lot of oil and leaked some, but I didn't use enough to really look hard for a leak. When taking the engine apart the external oil tubing to the head broke easily apart. I wondered later if it didn't have a crack in it that was leaking oil before the teardown.
- 4 Hard shifting, and the Neutral light switch: While the motor was on the bench, I resoldered the leads to the neutral light, and installed it, adjusting it as best I could without having the transmission coupled to anything. Upon startup, neutral was almost impossible to hit and shifting was hard, taking a strong pull with my toe. After much thought, I hit on the idea that the switch may be screwed in too far. BINGO. This adjustment is very fine, I found that less than one flat on the threads ($1/6^{\text{th}}$ turn) was the difference between it being too tight - resulting in hard shifting, and the light not coming on at all. Works fine now.
- 5 Oil filter adapter: The bike had an aftermarket threaded insert to allow a more standard and easily found oil filter to be screwed on. Apparently I lost this when doing the overhaul. The oil filter was discarded, and the adapter may have been with it. I will probably replace it and go back to \$4.00 oil filters, the ones that fit the original thread are about \$13.00.
- 6 Other items to note, I had a couple of spokes break on the rear wheel a few years back, and found the Norton uses three different spokes, one length on the front, and two different lengths on the rear wheel. Replacing them

wasn't hard, and took care of the problem. Apparently, they do not need to be replaced as a set.

- 7 I replaced the front master cylinder with a sleeved smaller cylinder, it made a tremendous improvement in the front brake. That and having the front disc turned to take off what was left of the chrome plating and having it drilled (the drilling is mostly for looks) gave the bike close to modern day braking.

The following is an article from Bob Yancey on his experience at the 2013 International Norton Rally in Buffalo, Wyoming

2013 INOA Rally

Last summer's Norton rally was a real hoot. It was held at beautiful Buffalo Wyoming which is 1200 miles from St. Louis. I made some new friends and visited with some old ones. Each day had great group rides scheduled with many small groups going their own way after the group rides were over. Most of the rides had spectacular scenery and the Alpine loop and Crazy Woman Canyon rides were jaw dropping. They kind of made my neck hurt from having my head racked into the straight back position digging on all the cliffs and spires. I think I said "wow" a few hundred times. Actually My neck was a little sore before I got there because we stopped by the Badlands and Wind Cave National Parks as we went all through The Black Hills. There was a long group ride to the Little Big Horn and the town of Buffalo is just down the road from the Fetterman Massacre Site. It seemed like history was everywhere. There were 315 people registered with it is believed 150 Norton's. As always there is a smattering of other makes. The weather was perfect. Most evenings there were Tec Sessions and we had a slide show of the new Norton factory one night. One of INOA members was in England and he went by there and they gave him a bit of a private tour. It is very small and I wish them all the luck. Buffalo is a very pleasant small town. It was a real delight to be part of an invading hoard of Norton Riders. It is so nice to see Norton's wherever you go! We stayed at place that had cabins and it was full of Commando's. No one needed an alarm clock with all those big twins close by. What a nice way to wake up. Next year is at Ashland Oregon only 2050 miles from St. Louis. A bit of trivia, they say that the first Norton rally ever held by, what was or would become the US Norton Owners Association was held in the Mo. Ozarks.

The Night Before Christmas

T'was the night before Christmas at the motorcycle store
The sales clerks were gone; they'd locked up the door
Back in shop service, tools were hung with great care
The floors had been swept, the workbenches bare.
Sales had been brisk, filling staff with elation
As they headed down south for their winter vacation.

The new shiny sport bikes had all been sold out
And all that was left was an Indian Scout,
A Norton Commando, a Rudge Multi too,
And a black BMWR32.
A Vincent, a Matchless and Velocette
And a drippy old Brough that wouldn't start on a bet.

"This stinks," said the Norton, "We're all just as fine
As those Japanese bikes the kids buy all the time."

"You're right," said the Vincent as he grew agitated,

"All I need is to get my back tire inflated.

Then I could compete with the best of 'em yet."

"Me, too! I'm still fast," cried the old Velocette.

"If someone was handy, someone was smart,

They'd know how to fix us and get us to start."

And so while they grumbled and whined and complained,

They didn't notice that a visitor came.

He was dressed all in black leather, from his head to his toes

And his helmet had stickers, reflective that glows

His beard was snow white. It reached to his chest.

How he got in the door was anyone's guess.

He looked them all over. "Merry **Christmas**," he said.

Are you fellows available to pull my big sled?"

"Who, us?" laughed the Matchless. "We're rusty and old.

Nobody wants us, that's why we're not sold.

The kids want electrics, not old timey kick starts

These young punks think we're bikes for old farts."

"My Lucas headlight hasn't worked well in years,"

Said the Rudge. "And my gearbox is missing some of its gears.

I'd be much obliged if you'd look at my choke,

And the bushing inside my magneto is broke."

"My mixture is rich, I think," said the Beemer.

"Does anyone know how to set the carb leaner?"

Then Santa said "stop the whining you guys.

You're legends and history in lots of men's eyes.

So what if you're rusty and don't look brand new?

Hondas and Hy-Busas wouldn't be here without you."

The vintage bikes' lights started glowing with pride,

And the Norton Commando said, "Let's all take a ride!"

"I'm ready, let's go, come on!" said the Brough, (bruff)

Let's get it in gear and show 'em our stuff."

They took to the road, their pipes roared like thunder.

And Santa **sat** back in his sled filled with wonder.

And he said as he watched them race into the night,

“Merry [Christmas](#) to all, and to all a safe night.”

Kathy Gehrhardt, Delaware Valley Norton Riders Chapter of the International Norton Owners Association

A visit to the Barber Motorsport Museum

Bill Henkel

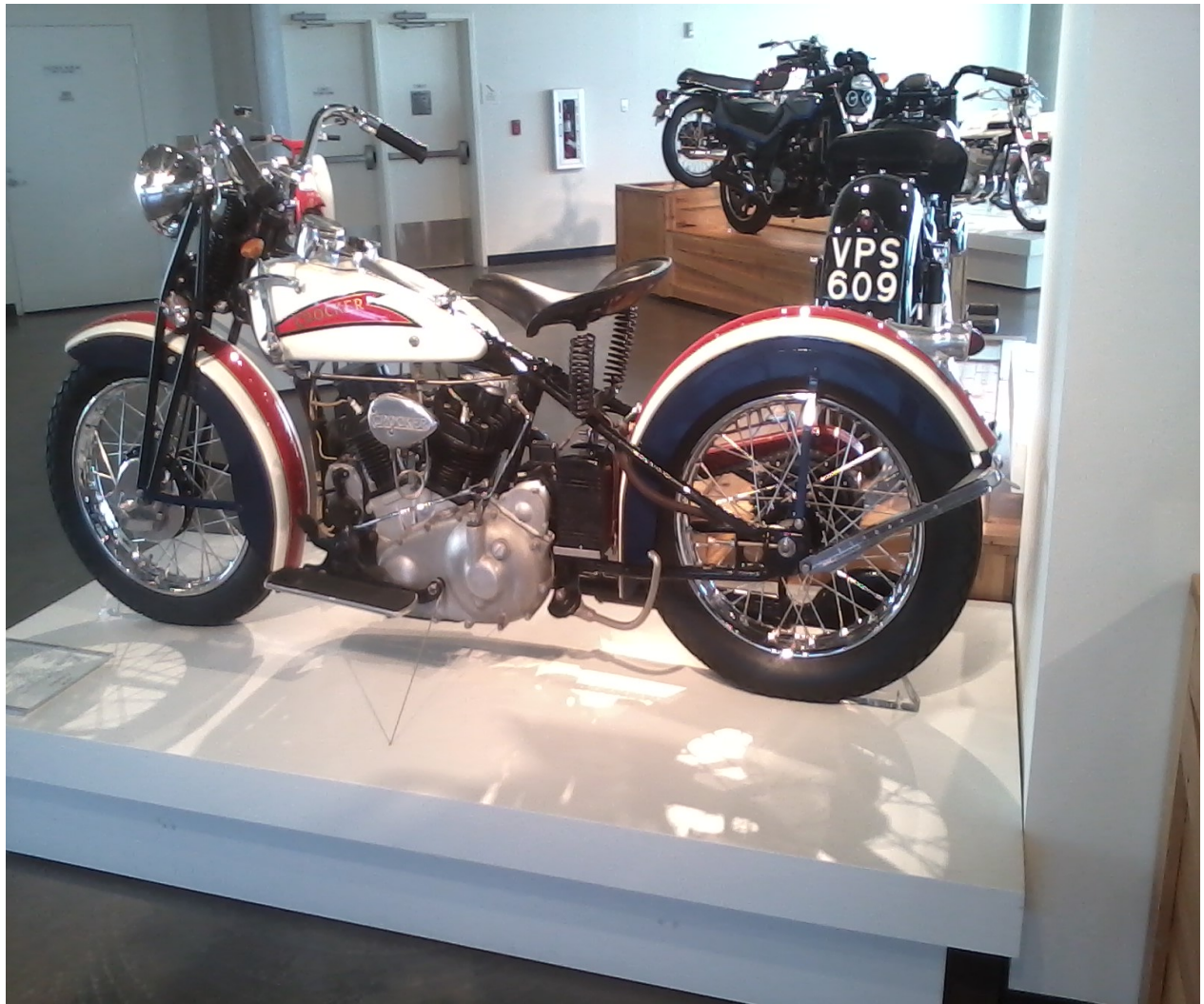
On our vacation trip down to Florida in September, I somehow convinced my wife that the 200 mile detour to the Barber Motorsports Museum would be a great idea.

We arrived at the gate at about 3:00 P.M. Allowing me about 3 hours to try to view, photograph, read about, and circumnavigate the entire collection. Which consists of motorcycles of every make, vintage, racing, and rarity. This along with a pretty nice collection of Lotus automobiles, racing and personal.

As you have probably heard the place is very impressive. From the entry gates, museum building with its unique sculptures outside, to the onsite world quality race track. Overall, it gives person a feeling of immense awe and anticipation. Unfortunately, my wife did not share the feeling. But, I believe a forward thinking group of local businessmen had already come up with a way to address this, with the placement of a fairly large outlet mall near the facility.



After entering the building and paying my admission fee, it was hard to determine with my limited time which way I needed to go first. Unfortunately, or fortunately, the museum is layed out in semi random collections of vehicles. Although there seem to be specific areas for racing and ultra, vintage vehicles, the majority of the motorcycle collection was mixed, with no real division between British, Italian, American or otherwise, even age. I guess that's what makes the sections so interesting. You don't know what you will find. Maybe, a beautifully engineered Crocker, next to a 12 cylinder, custom Kawasaki.



Near the Crocker, sat a couple of AJS Porcupines, one of which was voted the First in Class winner at the Concours d' Elegance at Pebble Beach in 2009. Very interesting and beautiful racing bike, unfortunately, without the supercharging disallowed after WWII and reliability issues, it was not very competitive.



As the porcupine, many of the bikes in the collection were brought back to pristine condition with the help of 2012 AMA Hall of Fame inductee and former Norton employee Brian Slark.

I took a great number of photographs, so many, the battery went dead on my digital camera and I had to resort to using my mega-pixel cell phone. You will probably notice the difference in the quality in this one and the subsequent articles I will attempt to milk from this visit.

They have a number of nice Nortons in the collection from an early 1929 Model 18 with its acetylene head and tail lamps. To a F1 Classic, Wankel powered unit. Also representing the Norton line was the legendary Manx, displayed amongst other bikes of note in the racing section of the museum.





Unfortunately, three hours is not adequate to indulge yourself completely in this museum of abundant visual splendor. This was made apparent when the nice lady from the gift shop came up and told me the museum would close in five minutes, while I frantically tried to see the last of the Lotus race cars. Also, spying my wife sitting, with chin in hand, near the exit, I knew it was time to go. A quick stop in the gift shop to purchase the obligatory baseball cap and we were off.

The following photographs submitted by Mr. Steve Hurst



King Mike wins it all at Creve Coeur Lake



John Wuebbling's Fall Ride



B

Bike Night at Schafly's Bottlewerks

The following from Marty's archives

THE BIKER, THE FLIGHT ATTENDANT, AND THE CRABS

A motorcycle rider boarded an airplane in New Orleans with a box of frozen crabs and asked a blonde flight attendant to take care of them for him. She took the box and promised to put it in the crew's refrigerator.

He advised her that he was holding her personally responsible for them staying frozen, mentioning in a very haughty manner that he was a biker, and proceeded to rant at her about what would happen if she let them thaw out. Needless to say, she was annoyed by his behavior.

Shortly before landing in New York, she used the PA to announce to the entire cabin, "Would the biker who gave me the crabs in New Orleans, please raise your hand?"

Not one hand went up . . . so she took them home, and ate them.

Two lessons here:

1. Bikers aren't as smart as they think they are.
2. Blondes aren't as dumb as most folks think.

Court refuses trial by combat – (copied from The Telegraph UK)

By David Sapsted

12:01AM GMT 16 Dec 2002

A court has rejected a 60-year-old man's attempt to invoke the ancient right to trial by combat, rather than pay a £25 fine for a minor motoring offence.

Leon Humphreys remained adamant yesterday that his right to fight a champion nominated by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) was still valid under European human rights legislation. He said it would have been a "reasonable" way to settle the matter.

Magistrates sitting at Bury St Edmunds on Friday had disagreed and instead of accepting his offer to take on a clerk from Swansea with "samurai swords, Ghurka knives or heavy hammers", fined him £200 with £100 costs.

Humphreys, an unemployed mechanic, was taken to court after refusing to pay the original £25 fixed penalty for failing to notify the DVLA that his Suzuki motorcycle was off the road.

After entering a not guilty plea, he threw down his unconventional challenge. Humphreys, from Bury St Edmunds, said: "I was willing to fight a champion put up by the DVLA, but it would have been a fight to the death."