



# Peashooter

The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club - Surrey Branch

www.surreynoc.org.uk

Issue 5 - May 2009

## Prizes and Plaudits at Ardingly...

The South of England Real Classic Motorcycle Show on March 29th was the Branch's first foray into the world of Bike Shows and represented the first opportunity for us to compete with other clubs. Five Club Members agreed to polish up their Bikes and bring them to the show and everyone agreed we did really well.



Whilst we weren't successful this time with the 'Best Club Stand' Prize (We were robbed by the AJS & Matchless Club) Our member, Tony Curzon went away with the best Sixties Road Bike award for his Norton P11 'High Pipe' and we attracted a number of other Nortons to the Stand. Tony's Unified Twin, excited much attention as it was the first time, he'd shown the bike for some years and Harvey Ward's Beautiful 1931 Model 18 deserved best in show – only to be stymied by a bureaucratic hiccup and a faulty Horn wire...

The Next Show will be the Southern Classic Show at Kempton Park on 9th May – We hope to get some more Banners from the National Club and will be fielding a strong selection again – come and support us!



## Get your bike into Brooklands - for free!

To celebrate the NOC Golden Jubilee, Surrey's Branch Committee has decided to encourage as many Nortons as possible to parade in front of the public at our 'Brooklands Day' on May 16th. The first twenty members who book their bikes into the Brooklands Day page on the branch website (www.surreynoc.org.uk), will get their full booking fee of £8.00 refunded on the day". Said Chairman, Peter White.

"After all, he said - What are we about, if not to celebrate and promote the Norton Marque?" Let's get as many Nortons as we can to Brooklands on May 16th and show the public what great bikes they are!"

Surrey Branch Members will be swelled by a large number of others arriving from around the UK as the event is accredited as a 'Golden Jubilee Passport Event'. Members will be able to parade their bikes around a specially constructed paddock area and attempt Brooklands famous Test Hill during the afternoon.

The full Museum experience will be open to Members and the full range of Brooklands Norton Racers will be on a special display. Haven't booked yet? Call Peter on 01372 200193 or 07768 734200 to confirm you'll be there!

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# Pioneering!

Most of us ride (or wish for) either the bikes we rode in our youth, or those we wished we rode. The really old stuff mostly sits in museums, and we mostly just walk past. They usually look dull and dusty, bits are missing, seized up or broken, and they are not very glamorous. But basically, a motorbike for most of us is a toy – and what use is a toy in a museum? It's only fun if we get a chance to play with it. If we just want performance, we can buy a new bike. But if we want a toy, surely we want one with play value? And that's where the Veterans score. It's a pity there aren't more to go around. I'm lucky enough to have had the loan of one or two – and this is a little essay about Bernard Harding's 107 year old 'Quadrant Motorcyclette', which I've ridden in the Pioneer Run for about ten years now.

Quadrant built motorbikes in Birmingham from about 1901 to the end of the 1920's. In 1902 it was one of the many firms (including Triumph and Royal Enfield and many others) that used Minerva engines from Belgium. At that time, these were 'clip on' engines, that were designed to clamp to the down tube of a standard bicycle. Actually, a really standard bicycle would not have lasted long under all the power (well – vibration, actually), and firms like Quadrant (as well as Minerva and Triumph) built frames heavier than normal cycles, often with reinforced front forks. So, although the engine is a 'clip on', this is a proper motorbike. This was the Gold Star of the day – but it only survives because it was rescued in 1958.

So what is the Pioneer Run? Mostly, today, it's a good excuse for every able bodied biker in the South East to converge on Brighton in the early spring for no better reason than to be sociable. But the trigger for all this is the Sunbeam Club's run for pre-1915 motorbikes from Epsom Downs to Brighton. This year, there were 363 entrants.

The ride really begins a few weeks before, with the heart-in-mouth experience of the MOT. If all goes well, this entails a brief mystified look on the tester's face, followed by a close scrutiny of the tyres, horn, brakes (all three sets) – but there isn't a lot else. So we wait for 20 minutes for the National Computer to churn out a piece of paper, and breathe a sigh of relief.

Now open the throttle valve and air valve. Retard the ignition, and close the twist grip ignition cut-out switch. Squeeze the decompressor lever, pedal a bit, let go of the lever, and Hey! Presto! It roars into life! Lots of noise and vibration, so throttle back and play with all those levers until happy.

Now twist the grip switch and stop, take bike off stand, climb aboard, and pedal away for real. There is no gearbox, so pedalling fast and furious is tough work if you are facing uphill! In that case, it's a case of run, drop decompressor, and vault-on-board, which is much more fun. Especially if you stick your

foot on the left pedal when it's rising – and thus jam the back-pedal brake on and stop dead. Hey-ho!

Once underway it's real pleasure. Nice, high riding position means you can see over the hedges, although I admit that fast downhill roundabouts give me pause for thought! A shot of oil is a good idea occasionally. I mustn't forget to give it the odd plunger every few miles – better too much than too little (although the cast iron piston in cast iron bore is not all that sensitive to the odd dry spot). Oil sloshes around inside the crank case, and oozes out round the side exhaust valve to drip all over the contact breaker – which thus runs in a filthy black oil bath.



Hills can be a bit of a snag. Remember I have no gears, so if I slow down too much it will stall, and then it can be a long walk. The alpine pass on the approach to Pease Pottage is a challenge, but fine fettling means I sail up this year with a little LPA (light pedal assistance). If I'm not so lucky (or fit), I leap off before the engine stops, retard the ignition a touch, back off throttle and air valve, and run up the hill alongside the bike. The tyro who bought this in 1902 was probably a fast racing bicyclist, and fit as a flea – but I'm neither, so I have ended up just pushing a dead engine – holding the decompressor in, and listening to it chuff-chuff. Must remember to switch off ignition if I stop – I would not want to stop with the contact breaker closed and draining the battery.

Mostly I meet with good humour and some consideration on the road. A hand held high and a look of panic has got me onto lots of roundabouts where I had no right of way. Some Pioneer riders complain about the traffic – but I find it's other Vet riders wandering about off their own line that cause me as many problems as anybody else.

When I finally arrive on Madeira Drive, I naively hope for a hero's welcome – but this rather plain machine is immediately lost in the throng of more glamorous looking stuff. But I know it's the best bike on the Drive on the day, and that's (nearly) good enough!

“What about breakdowns?” I hear someone muttering at the back. Well – it's pretty simple really. Automatic inlet valve (the piston just sucks it open), coil ignition – simple faults are mostly caused by vibration. The usual problem is with a changing contact breaker gap. I've given up keeping the contacts clean – it makes no difference anyway. Fingers crossed – and mobile phone in pocket (what a load of wimps we have become!..) – and it'll get there.

Many thanks to Bernard Harding for the loan of the Quadrant, and Dave Betheridge who towed the recovery trailer - without whom the run would not have been possible.

*David Cooper*

# The Peashooter Guide

## May

**May 9, 2009 Southern Classic Bike Show - Kempton Park** - Come and support the Club at our local Show! - Display your Bike on the Club Stand! Contact Peter on 07768 734200

**Monday May 11, 2009 - - 8.00 - 11.00pm**

Social Night at the Royal Oak PH Leatherhead

Fancy a beer with mates - Come and sample Tina & Colin's excellent real ales with added banter from other members!

**Saturday, May 16, 2009**

**9:00a-5:30p**

Brooklands Day! - Join us as we take over Brooklands!

Book your bike for a run up Test Hill, Parade in front of Norton History - Our Branch Golden Jubilee Event - Not to be missed! - Call Peter on 07768 734200 for details

**Solent Branch Camping Weekend** -Friday 22nd-Sunday 24th May -At 'The Flower Pots' pub in Cheriton, near Winchester. All NOC Members are welcome to join in although if you want to camp, it's best to phone the pub first on 01962 771318. The Solent Camping weekend is a very relaxed affair, we go for rides (if there's enough interest) we chat about bikes, we play music (Bring your Guitar), have a BBQ and even drink a beer or two... Families are welcome - Contact is Jem Nicholls Tel: 02392 798292

**Monday, June 1st, 2009 -7.00pm-10:45pm**

**Club Night Summer Ride Out!** - Yes folks, meet at the Star PH a tad earlier than normal, then we will be Riding Out to Newlands Corner via Ranmore and a few other twisty lanes led by our own Colin Wood

## June

**June 8, 20098:00p-10:45p Social Night at the Royal Oak PH Leatherhead**

Fancy a beer with mates - Come and sample Tina & Colin's excellent new year Brews with added banter from other members!

**Friday, June 19, 2009 - 8:00a-9:30p**

**'The Unapproachable Norton' - Donnington Park**

**In conjunction with the newly reformed Norton Motorcycle Company, the intention is to amass as many Nortons of all descriptions and make it the biggest assembly of Nortons in the World!! There will be displays, demo runs, trade stalls, track sessions, famous bikes and riders, marshalled track runs etc A DAY NOT TOO BE MISSED!! Mark your Diaries NOW!!!**

**Saturday 20th June - 8.00am- 11.30pm**

This year, Norton Day will be on the Saturday of the weekend. This is to fit in with the programme for the Donington Park Revival event which incorporates The Unapproachable Norton festival on Friday 19th. June with classic racing organised by the CRMC on the Saturday and Sunday. Expect a rather special Norton Day with much of the interesting machinery from the previous day still on display plus the opportunity to see famous Nortons and riders on the circuit riding in parades between the racing. - Call Peter on 07768 734200

**Monday June 29th - Club Night - Summer Barbeque at**

**The Royal Oak** -Club Night BUT change venue to Royal Oak PH for Summer BBQ. After the recent Ride Out's and National Norton Day at Donnington, Colin our Secretary has agreed to lay on a BBQ at the Royal Oak in Leatherhead for us all!!!

## The Parking Blues

The end of March saw a continued escalation in the Campaign against Westminster City Council who are now charging Motorcycles for parking in their area. This unwelcome outcome has been impacted by improved technology which allows payment via mobile phone and Credit Card. A number of Branch members felt sufficiently aggrieved to join the Demonstration against the charges which took place on March 31st. Many thousands of bikers converged on Trafalgar Square and after some speeches by MAG spokesmen and others, paraded (very slowly) up to the Westminster Council Offices to lobby Councillors who were discussing the issue that evening.

According to Branch Member, Clive Hale - who managed to get into the meeting, the ruling Tory Councillors displayed very little sympathy for Motorcyclists, awareness of economics or common sense. The Campaigners see what Westminster is doing as the 'Thin end of the wedge' - If they're able to get away with it gradually everyone will! - Expect more campaigning in the months ahead! -PW



# The Pluto Frame, and the Unified Twin Part 2- By Anthony Curzon

Branch Member and Unified Twin owner Anthony Curzon continues with Part 2 of his article originally written for Norton magazine Roadholder in 2004.....

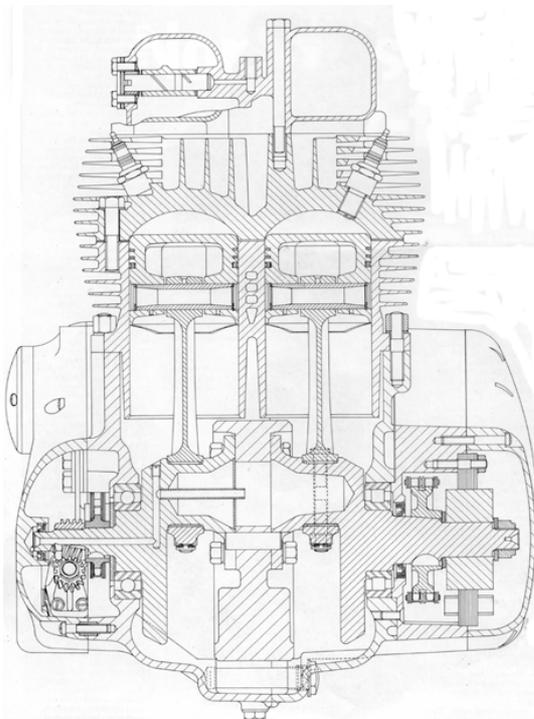
The crankshaft, which has a big end diameter of 1¾ inch or 1.750, was first tried on the Unified Twin, and then used later on the pre unit 650ss. The late Brian Jones explained a lot of the internal details of this engine to me. He also gave me the works drawing that showed a complete lay out of the motor, but a really important factor that he informed me of was, that you could actually make engine parts from it. It was a very sad day when he passed away, as I always wanted him to see it running and ride it. He told me it lapped MIRA at over 120 mph, with Fred Swift on board, and when Fred came in and said to him that it was his turn for a ride. Brian then told me it was one of those times that he was so glad that it had started to rain heavily. The frame they were using was the Norton Model 77 type, and with a 650 twin giving between 44 and 48 bhp, it must have been quite a ride. Reynolds made all the frames for Norton at that period, and the Model 77 frame, was used for economical reasons, at the time. (Norton not wanting to have a frame made just for this one off motor)

It had a lot of documented over heating problems. This can be seen from the drawing, where a pencil sketch can be seen where the designers were trying to sort out the over heating problematical situation at the time. There are also small design changes to the barrels, in relation to the fining. The fins that go around the cam followers, some of them go all around the follower castings tunnels, and some of the fins stop at the front of the casting tunnels. A small point, but only noticed when you are up close and personal to the barrels. One of the cylinder heads was extensively modified to over come the over heating problems, and this head is currently fitted to the present running machine. The twin carburettor head has 32mm inlet ports, and the inlet manifold is also of a 32mm configuration. The breather assembly at the front vents straight out into the atmosphere, and it does not have any timed breather arrangement like the stock Dominator twins. A one-way valve has been added, so that no vented vapour is returned to the crankcases. The front of the crankcase has just a hole at the front, for the purpose of a breather arrangement, and a steel plate with a breather tube, is screwed to the top of a casting, and this bolted to the front of the crankcase casting. This breather arrangement can clearly be seen on page 29 of Classic Bikes review of the Unified Twin on September 2004.

The original push rods only had steel tops, and the bases of the push rods were just plain alloy. I have since had a set made that are of the barrel configuration, as per the 650ss, and Atlas type, with steel top and bottom cups. There were only two of these push rods with the consignment of parts, when I obtained the machine. .



Engine Builder Malcolm Saggars with Anthony Curzon and the Unified Twin.

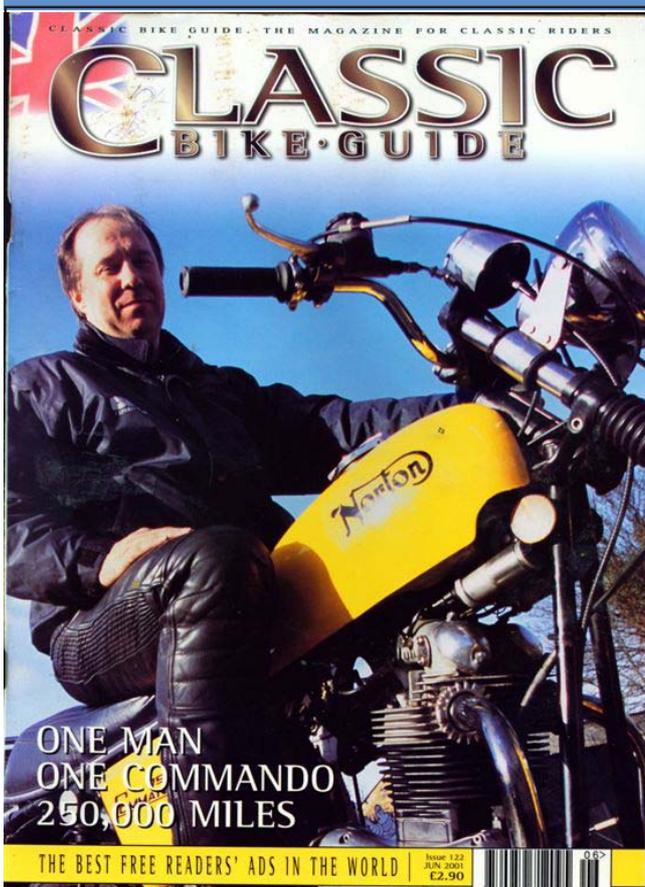


The crankshaft has a different internal sludg trap arrangement, and the bearings are twice the size of the standard Dominator twins. The Unified Twin has 77.5mm bore and 68.5mm stroke and has a capacity of 646.33cc (this for those who like the small details in life) these dimensions are shown on the drawing. There is a pair of over bored barrels, and may be a 750cc version was even envisaged at one stage. This will now be lost in time, as unfortunately most of these great men, have passed to the great racetrack in the sky. I was reliably informed by Brian Jones, that all the problems had been fixed, including all the over heating problems, and the motor was good to go, but, and this being a big BUT, and touched on by Frank, in his brilliant article in The Real Classic Magazine, that it was a Bracebridge Street created motor, and not a Plumstead creation.

Therefore it was deemed not to be of any use in a commercial sense of the word.

This I assumed after discussions with many of Norton's design personnel. I had a taste of this in the 1980's when I spoke to one of the former Bracebridge Street personnel, who was part of the design time, on the Unified Twin project. This particular gentleman did the drawings for the Unified Twin. During our conversation he turned round and said, "well you know, that lot down there" Baffled I asked, "who down there" and he exclaimed "you know, them in Plumstead" Now this being nearly 25 years after the event, and he still felt really strongly about the management, and personnel at AMC, SE18, Plumstead, South London. There was a sort of veiled animosity that came across, that Plumstead, had ruined the great name of Norton at that particular time.

(to be continued)  
Anthony Curzon



Guest Speaker, Tony Page on CBG's Cover in 2001

## The Annual Dinner

### - So good we want it twice!

When the Branch committee agreed to run a Dinner at the end of March, it wasn't a wholly unanimous decision. "We should hold it in September, at the anniversary of our founding", said Branch Programme Secretary, Steve Eccleshall. But the need for a constant stream of events for the diary eventually won out with the promise that if it was successful, the branch might have two 'Annual' Dinners this year.

Bookings for the event were fairly slow and steady, but eventually 25 Members booked on the website or thrust greasy fivers into Treasurer Dick Thurley's hands and the evening was a great success.

Guest Speaker, Tony Page regaled us with stories of vast, round the world voyages on his Norton Commando (and various other bikes) and Matt, the Landlord of the Star, organised a superb meal.

For Steve, perhaps overcome with the excitement (or alternatively, a slight miscalculation with some sleeping tablets?), meant an early exit, but don't worry Steve, - We'll hold another one later this year!

## BLR Engineering

Let us look after your small engineering work - Excellent Quality and fantastic Value- Norton Cylinder Heads and Valve Guides a speciality - 143 Hershams Road, Hershams, Surrey KT12 1RR. Call Ian at: 01932 224601 or check out our website at: [www.blrengineering.co.uk](http://www.blrengineering.co.uk)

## EndPoint

### Motorcycle Camping

The following communication has been received at the Peashooter Editorial Offices:

Dear Peashooter,  
I have a small camping meadow with shower and toilet facilities. I am in North Devon, motorcycle owners are warmly welcomed. A small group can have sole use by arrangement. I also have a 1 bed caravan for the less hardy.

*Dawn Hughes (Mrs)*

We do not know the lady concerned, nor whether she may be connected to Surrey NOC in some way. If the email came out of the blue then our fame must be spreading.

Further information is urgently sought and the Editor has voted a pint of beer (paid from his own pocket) to the SNOG member who can shed some light on this mystery.

If anyone decides to investigate in person, remember to keep a sharp look out for the mangelwurzel (*Beta vulgaris*) which can become vicious if disturbed during the mating season!

### Brooklands - air raid shelter

For a neat little addendum to the Brooklands Day article on Page 1, the following website is well worth a visit:

[http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/sites/v/vickers\\_shelter/index.shtml](http://www.subbrit.org.uk/sb-sites/sites/v/vickers_shelter/index.shtml)

The site details the building of a massive air raid shelter, the building of which must have been a Herculean task and further underlines the importance of the site, particularly during the war years. As you ride your Norton up the Test Hill on May 16th spare a thought for the poor devils who had to dig it out!

There is no doubt as to Brooklands significance not only in the history of motor racing but also aircraft production and how many people nowadays know that such strenuous efforts were made to protect the work force?

Wheelbarrows and shovels in those days, we imagine...