



Peashooter

The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club - Surrey Branch

www.surreynoc.org.uk

Issue 6 - July 2009

A Busy Summer!

Are you enjoying it? Since the last issue, Surrey Branch has organised a superb stand at the Southern Classic Bike Show at Kempton Park, organised a Grand 'Brooklands Day' with the opportunity for members to take their bikes up Test Hill, Run a local Ride out to Ranmore, had two Social nights and organised a super Barbeque at the Royal Oak! - This is not to mention appearing at The Unapproachable Norton at Donington Park, attending Norton Day and countless other things! It seems that 2009 is rapidly becoming a Vintage year for Nortons!



Lining up for the off, at Brooklands

This Newsletter is a bumper issue too. There's news from our Press officer, Dave Gibson about other 'vintages', the final episode of Anthony Curzon's story of the Unified Twin and news from Peter Ashley, who's been working hard (or is that drinking hard?) over in the Big Apple. Tony Lennon's got us a great deal on Commando Brake upgrades, Clive Hale's reached Turkey on his 'long way round' and I become reacquainted with an old friend from the Jet set.... With 6 Pages of News and views this issue, we hope you enjoy Peashooter too! Ride Safe - Tim

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Peter Williams
Development Engineer
and No. 1 Rider
for Norton.

Peter Williams to speak to Branch!

We're proud to announce that Peter Williams has agreed to speak to members at a special first anniversary dinner event to be held in September!

A superb and amusing public speaker, Peter was arguably the last great British bike racer of the 70s. He designed and raced the "Works" Nortons with 25 horsepower down on the new Suzukis and Yamahas – and beat them on both sides of the Atlantic.

It was Peter who carried out the design work for the F750 effort having designed the 72 Frame and the 73 Monocoque JPS Commando Racer. This machine used a frame made from sheet stainless steel. The monocoque frame performed a dual role by being the fuel tank as well as a structural member. But also it was designed to store the fuel as near the road as possible to lower the centre of gravity, and the structure was shaped so as to create the optimum cooling draught for the upper engine.

Peter won 12 National level races in 1973, including setting a new lap record at the IOM at 107.27 mph. Still involved in Motorcycle design, he's most recently been associated with the Lotus EVO Electric Motorcycle Racer built to challenge at the TTXGP.

Details of the Dinner will be confirmed over the coming month with special notifications to all Surrey members.

A chance meeting.....and now I'm on the bottle!

It was a cold November day in 2007 and it was raining so hard that the water was flowing past, and over, my now sodden bike boots. I had agreed to display my Nortons, a '35 Inter and a '37 Model 50, at the local village Christmas fair.



It was one of those “what am I doing here?” moments that we motorcyclists occasionally experience in such conditions.

Suddenly, there was a screech of brakes and a chap ran from his car, loudly proclaiming that he could not believe his luck and asking if he could take a picture of my Model 50. He later explained that he was a graphic designer and he had been given a commission to design a label for a new wine from Patagonia, wherever that is. The wine company wanted the label to feature a Norton, as Che Guevara had ridden his machine through that country in 1952. The wine was to be called “La Poderosa”, the powerful one. This was the title that Che had given his bike.

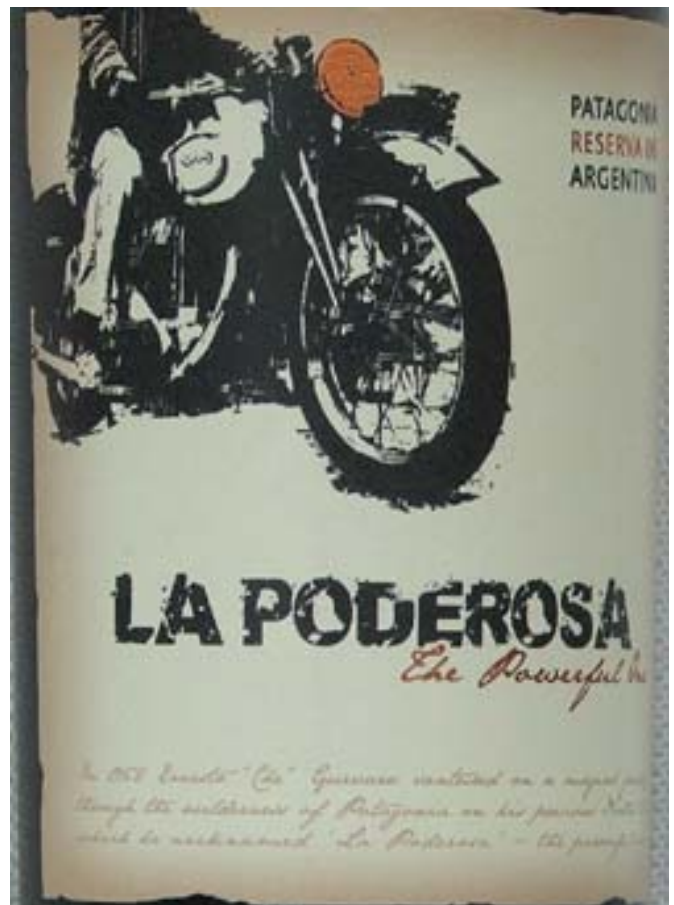
Yes I know he didn't ride a Model 50 and yes I know that an ES2 or an “18” was used in the film “Motorcycle Diaries” (incidentally, the poster shows the bike in mirror image, timing side on the left). . With it's original tinware, panniers etc, my lovely little Norton was a dead ringer for the bike used in that film.

Exchanging addresses, my new friend Eric arranged to visit my house with a marketing man, to take some better photos. Glad to be of help. I couldn't find my repro flying helmet but agreed to pose on the bike of course when the day came. I noticed the launch was announced in “The Vintage Motor Cycle” of January, 2009..

Then I forgot all about it until one evening in April, a chap walked up my drive with a bottle of wine under his arm....”you don't remember me do you”.....and of course I did not. All was explained and I gratefully received the bottle of La Poderosa and that is a photo of me on the label. Fame at last!. Wonder why they cut my head off?

I believe the wine, “intense damson and black cherry aromas backed by a hint of chocolate and LEATHER” is available through Oddbins although to date, they have always been sold out whenever I called. Could it be due to that dashing figure on that iconic Norton I wonder?. The Branch of has offered a half case of La Poderosa to the club as part of the Golden Jubilee celebration raffle.

Dave Gibson



The Peashooter Guide

July

3rd-4th July - **NOC National Rally** - Keynsham Rugby Football Ground. Keynsham Near Bristol (Hosted by the Bristol Branch)

10th- 12th July - The VMCC's magnificent **FESTIVAL OF 1000 BIKES** returns to Mallory Park circuit - Massive variety of activities and displays all weekend including the opportunity to ride your classic on track (register asap before spaces sell out). Plus Past Masters' parades, rare and exotic race bikes in action, grasstrack and trials displays, avenue of clubs, straight-line sprinting, trade stands and autojumble. Special guest Carl Fogarty. Evening entertainment includes live music and more, plus camping, fireworks, real ale etc. 01283 540557, www.vmcc.net

13th July **Social Night** at the Royal Oak PH Leatherhead

18th - 26th July **Norton International Rally** - Salzburgring nr Salzburg and Salzbach near Steyr Austria

Monday 27th July - Surrey Branch Club Night- Ride Out

Yes folks, we meet at the Star PH a tad earlier than normal, then we will be Riding Out, lead by our Programme Secretary, Steve - hopefully mounted on a Norton if his Commando has been resurrected by then! With the intention of heading towards Capel area to sup an evenings ale in the sunshine.....

August

Monday August 10th - Social Night at the Royal Oak PH Leatherhead - Fancy a beer with mates? - Come and sample Tina & Colin's excellent brews with added banter from other members!

Sat August 15th & Sunday 16th The Bluebell Railway in Sussex hosts its annual **VINTAGE TRANSPORT WEEKEND** combining steam trains with traction engines, classic cars and motorcycles. Entries very welcome. Forms from 01737 634983 or www.bluebell-railway.co.uk/bluebell/events/vintage/vintage09.html

Tuesday August 18th - Ride Out to NOC @ Thames Valley - Bracknell - Hoping to get a suitable group together and journey across to Bracknell to meet our counterparts on their Club Night to see their bikes and have some chat!

Monday, August 24, 2009 Club Night, One Week early!! Speaker or Quiz night to be confirmed! ooh feel the tension! As we have had a few Ride outs and its now in the School Hols with members away from the area we will arrange a Speaker or Quiz to entertain us all.

August 29th to 31st - The RUDGWICK STEAM SHOW offers a huge festival of country fair and steam show with automotive displays at the Showground, Rudgwick, off the A281 Between Horsham and Guildford. 01403 822378 or see www.rudgwicksteamshow.co.uk

Commando Brake upgrade

I am passing on a message from Barry Sykes of the Thames Valley Branch.

Some Commando owners may be aware of a front brake upgrade from RGM. It involves sleeving down the original master cylinder and fitting a smaller piston, as an alternative to fitting a non-standard cylinder. This involves carefully drilling out the cylinder and tapping it out for the replacement sleeve to be screwed in. It needs to be done right or cylinder is scrap - instructions are supplied, or RGM will do this for you but there is a long turnround time as they do them in batches. Barry has made specific jigs to do this accurately, and has now done several for Thames Valley members, including mine. I can vouch for the fact that it transforms the standard front brake from something that feels as though it has wooden brake pads to something in which you can have



confidence, and with a much lighter feel. No more white knuckles when you realise you're going a bit quick for that roundabout....

Barry has offered to do this conversion for Surrey members if you can buy the kit and supply all the parts to him (eg at the Thames Valley meeting, or by post). He does not use the internet, but you can call him on 07768875991 or 01189219044. I don't know what he currently charges, but it will be quite reasonable. RGM's part number is 050136, £36 +vat. - Tony Lennon

The Pluto Frame, and the Unified Twin Part 3- By Anthony Curzon

The following details are from the minutes of technical meetings at AMC in Plumstead, from 1959 through to 1961.

The report from a meeting held on 18 April 1961, and headed 1962 Models, and printed on 19 April 1961, shows item 26 under the heading, 1963 Models, states the following: -

1963 Models

26) Unified Twin to be deferred to 1964.

At a technical meeting held on 4 December 1959 the following was discussed and the decisions reached.

- 1) All design and testing for the next season is to be completed by 30th November.
- 2) All new integrated Twin engine was discussed at length
- 3) Three sets of drawings are to be obtained from Norton's and passed to Mr Watson on arrival. (That was a Mr H Watson)
- 4) Six prototype engines are being built and three will be allocated to AMC.
- 5) The drawing of the Project Department frame was inspected and discussed. It was agreed that this should proceed and a prototype (H W) should be built and tested. (H.W must stand for heavy weight)
- 6) Project drawings are to proceed with all possible speed and these are to be passed to Mr Watson on completion for detailing.
- 7) The Drawing Office will obtain any clarification required on this frame design with Mr.C. Smith of the project department.

'The design of a new and inexpensive O.H.V 250cc engine is to proceed in the Project Office. Wherever possible this should incorporate parts from the new twin engine and in effect should be the equivalent of half the twin engine'.

Meeting dated 27th July 1960 and headed as Design Projects, and states the following:-

'New designs have been the subject of full discussion and the following decisions have been made. They are listed in order of priority.

'2) Subject to tests the new "Pluto" frame proving satisfactory, a scaled down version to accommodate the new 250cc, unit is to be produced and design is to proceed in anticipation.'



Another meeting headed and dated as follows

1959 MODELS.

' 4. A redesigned Twin is desirable with a view to reducing cost. Time does not permit and consequently design work on the Twins will be restricted to the incorporation of an A.C. Generator. This will necessitate a new timing side crankcase and possible drive side also. If possible, the engine should be arranged so that the magneto type crankcase half can be used in special cases if required.'

Another meeting headed as below and dated 11th December 1959

Design Meeting: 1962 and Future Projects

"Of the items in the listed in the consolidated report of the 8th December and discussed on the 11th December, the following are to be regarded a Projects for the attention of Mr Walker's office and for subsequent procedure as agreed."

- 1) Redesigned Heavyweight frame including hubs.
- 2) Integrated 500cc and 650cc twin engines
- 3) Inexpensive 250cc OHV engine based new twin components where possible.

The minutes of items 4 and 5 dealt with the two strokes gearbox ratios, and a change to the G5/8 and G2CS/14CS frame, tubular instead of channel cradle section for these models frames.

The Unified Twin was also known as the P8, the Integrated Twin, and the Bill Pitcher Twin. The late and lamented Bob Collier called it the Bill Pitcher Twin, when I was researching the Unified Twin back in the 1980's. Sadly he passed away not long after I had conversed with him about this motor. I contacted Bert Hopwood, who denied any knowledge of it, and also his hatred of anything Plumstead also came through in his letter. I called Brian Jones - who was working for L.F.Harris, making Triumphs in Devon at the time - and told him about this. Brian explained that he was not that surprised by this, and he also explained, "Well if he tells you that he knows nothing about it then he can get rid of you, like forever" Doug Hele was not that forthcoming about the Unified Twin. He was working at Shenstone at the time, and he sent me a letter about what he could remember about the Unified Twin project.

I contacted Mick Duckworth of Classic Bike, and an article appeared in Classic Bike, September 1988. Mick managed to speak with all those involved, with the Unified Twin, and they were much more forthcoming with technical details, than they had given me. I guess this must be the power of the press. The finished machine then appeared in Classic Bike September 2004, and also in Real Classic, ridden by Real Classic and former Roadholder editor, Frank Westworth.

The machine has now covered over 300 miles, with no discernable problems. The only problem so far encountered has been, with the clutch actuating push rod levers hardened steel pin. This moved out of it's location twice on the way down from Newmarket, being ridden by Malcolm Saggars, to prove that the recreated Unified Twin's engine was capable of some form of sustained, long journey. Malcolm did not realise at first, why the clutch lever just flopped back onto the handlebars. He

Unified Twin (Cont.)

investigated the inside of the timing cover, and with the judicious use of a piece of wire managed to push the offending pin, back into place. This also happened again, halfway over the Dartford Bridge and this, I have been reliably informed never has been known to happen, to that particular component. This particular part came from the AMC's groups Matchless G2, and AJS Model 14 250cc single. The machine then went from the Dartford Tunnel to junction 4 on the M25 at between 70 and 80 mph. I am glad this problem was rectified before our esteemed editor rode it down at the Calne Rally in July. I suspect a shock; horror situation would have occurred if this mishap had befallen him, when out on his rode test, through the town of Calne.



The contact breaker is a Lucas 6ca unit, and the A/R unit is a 54425657, that came out of my Ranger 750, now that I have since fitted a Boyer electronic ignition unit to the Ranger's 750 motor. The oil being used is a semi synthetic, as recommended by Malcolm Saggars, just in case the so called over heating problem returns to haunt me. This (touching wood now) has not occurred since I have used it. When the next oil change comes, the oil being used will be changed to a fully synthetic, this being more resistant to over heating, than a standard mineral oil.

The suggestion about putting a Unified Twin into a Pluto frame sounded like a plan, but when the idea to actually do this was tried, then the real, and most tangible reason why these two components did not become a marriage made in heaven, and then came into view. The gearbox main-shaft is too high, and the swinging arm would have to be placed far too high, therefore it was not a viable proposition. There were also some concerns raised by some individuals, of my even wanting or attempting to have a Pluto frame fabricated, as this was construed as then being a fake. Therefore I have now decided on another course of action. So as some one once stated, "what one man has made, man can make again"

I can now prove to Al Osborne, that Norton actually did make a unit construction twin, even though he swore up and down, and that to his knowledge they never made one. The above he conveyed to me in a telephone conversation, last year, when I called him about having a wiring harness fabricated, for the then proposed Unified Twin project as a running machine.

Anthony Curzon 2004

From our NYC Correspondant

As the sticky New York summer's day relaxed into a more pleasant breezy dusk, I arranged to catch up with the local section of the International Norton Owners Association. Chuck Contrino, President of the Tri-State Norton Riders, was waiting for me at the "Ears Inn". He had ridden into Manhattan from Brooklyn on his tidy blue early Commando, and it too stood cooling on the sidewalk.

Ears Inn is where all manner of bikers meet on a Tuesday evening. It sits on the original East River bank, although now it is in the middle of a busy side street because land fill has pushed back the waters edge towards Hoboken. In a very friendly atmosphere I met Norton, Vincent, BSA and Triumph owners, most on their bikes; all pleased to see and hear a Brit.

Ears Inn serves Bass, Boddingtons and Speckled Hen, plus the usual range of American Punt (you know...***king close to water) The Brooklyn Larger is, however, very good. A darker brew with a taste much more like bitter. The beer is served in "pints" which are 16 fluid ounces rather than 20. This accounts for the smaller US gallon, and also how many beers were consumed.

As the evening wore on the hard core moved from the sidewalk to the interior of the bar to eat. Round the table were 4 people who had only met that evening, but were drinking and talking together as though they had known each other for years. Wade runs a photographic business and a couple of tidy A65s. Wes owns a garage, several classic British bikes and a number of European cars.



These people are well travelled; they have ridden in France, Spain, Portugal, IOM, and some know Guildford too! In America, where everything is bigger, their idea of a weekend ride is often more than a thousand miles. Race tracks and swap-meets are in the next state. They fill containers and ship dozens of bikes to Liverpool for a TT holiday.

The Surrey Branch of the NOC would do well to take inspiration from their commitment to riding and their warm hospitality. Get in touch with them if you are ever in New York!

Peter Ashley

Letters

Advertising

Dear Editor

I was disappointed with low turnout and exhibits at Brooklands, also as a new boy with no recognisable meeting point.- Andy Bird



Hi Tim - If its not too late, here's a pic taken by my Grandson on his phone at the Brooklands meeting. What a great day!

My bike No 14 is a 1948 348cc Manx. I finished restoring it last year and have competed in several sprints and one hill climb with it since.- Dave Carpenter



Dear Tim

I have attached a picture of Peter White, and Derek Bennett at the March Ardingly Show, where my P11 managed to get a 1st class award for the 1960 to 1969 class. This was the spring 2009 Ardingly Show on our first outing as a club, for the Surrey section of the NOC.

I wrote about 7 to 8 pages concerning the differences between the P11 models, as well as the differences between the specification changes for the N15CS, from 1963 to 1964, 1965,1966, 1967 and 1968. This I can send you for the newsletter, as I do not think it will be published else where. I was asked to do this by Chris Grimmett, and it took over a few days to complete it. I also sent him photo copies of all the sales brochures.
- Anthony Curzon

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Endpoint



Around the World on 800cc

Let us not forget intrepid SNOC member Clive Hale on his round the world trip. Clive was last heard of leaving Turkey, heading for Kazakhstan (Borat hosting a civic reception?) and all points East. The picture shows Clive's bike on the ferry out of Istanbul. Let's hope he was with it! You can keep up with Clive's adventure by going to www.clivesworldbiketour.com where you can also leave him a message.

A Jet-Blast from the Past

Pictured here on SNOC Brooklands day is editor Tim Laight leaning in a nonchalant fashion against a prototype P1127 that he had seen previously in 1964 flying at Dunsfold



Aerodrome. At that time, Tim's father was Head of Special Projects for Hawker Siddeley Aviation and he used to take Tim to Dunsfold on Saturday mornings to watch this aircraft. The P1127 was later named the Kestrel but of course became known as the Harrier and has been in service since 1969.

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44 Ember Lane, Esher, Surrey, KT10 8EP Tel: 020 8873 7015 www.surreynoc.org.uk