



Peashooter

The Newsletter of the Norton Owners Club - Surrey Branch

www.surreynoc.org.uk

Issue 7 - November 2009



A new beginning..?

A number of Branch Members have made contact with Peashooter, concerned that Peter & Colin (the current Chairman & Secretary) were leaving and does this mean that the club was finishing? "I hope not", said Peter, "But it's pretty vital that we find some of our 60 members who are willing to put themselves forward at the AGM to be held on Monday 26th!".

"Both of us would have liked to carry on but as we're both moving away from the area during the next few weeks, it's time for a new Committee team to take the Branch forward", said Peter.

"It will be much easier for the incoming team as the new committee will benefit from all the very useful experience we have gained during the past twelve months". The new committee will need to decide about the current website which was written by Peter. "I'll be happy to carry it on for a year or so", said Peter - "if asked to do so of course!"

A number of members have come forward during the past few days and confirmed their interest in standing. All committee positions will be elected at the AGM, and it's hoped that members will come forward at the meeting.



Mike doing his presidential duty at this year's International Rally in Austria

A Presidential visit!

Mike Jackson, Norton's former Sales Director, one-time owner of Andover Norton and National President of the NOC has agreed to talk to the Branch at the Club meeting on 30th November.

Mike has competed in trials and motocross events at the highest level in UK, Europe and USA. He began racing in 1954, riding on Francis Barnett, James, Greeves and AJS, winning numerous events. During this time he worked in sales for Greeves and later AJS. When he was appointed General Sales Manager for Norton Villiers Corp in 1970, he moved to the US, and raced AJS in West Coast Desert events. He enjoyed some top placings in the prestigious Barstow To Vegas Hare and Hounds and the Elsinore Grand Prix.

Mike's career with Norton Villiers continued - he became Sales Director for the European concern, before becoming Marketing Director for Norton Villiers Triumph Ltd between 1974 and 1981. In 1981 he became the owner of Andover Norton International Ltd and - 10 years later - co-owner of BSA Group Ltd.

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Peter Williams - The thinking Man's Racer

Members of the Surrey Branch of the Norton Owners Club had a treat in store when they invited former Racer, Peter Williams to their First Anniversary Dinner last month. They received a special preview of Peter's long awaited autobiography!

The Surrey Branch are justifiably proud of a remarkably successful first year and the Dinner, held at the Leatherhead Golf Club nearby the regular 'last monday in the month' venue of The Star in Kingston Road, Leatherhead.

Peter told a mixed audience of 35 members about his when he begged and borrowed a 250cc Race bike from his father, Jack Williams and dropped out of his Engineering degree course to go racing.

Peter soon had 'the bug' and within a few months had joined the UK Championship. So successful was he that within two years he was racing all round the world in the early equivalent of today's Moto GP.

Race wins were unfortunately elusive and Peter almost was dubbed the 'Nearly Man' of motorcycling coming 2nd six times on the Isle of Man.

In the early 1970's Peter was racing with the Norton team and working in their design workshop through the winter. Determined to give the old British designs every chance against an increasingly effective Japanese opposition, Peter developed a number of key technologies including Magnesium Cast wheels, Monocoque construction with a low centre of gravity and improved aerodynamic fairings.

Given 'Carte Blanche' by Norton to develop their 1973 Bike, Peter incorporated all his ideas into a stunning Norton Commando Monocoque Racer with which he won the Formula 750 race in the Isle of Man at an average speed of over 105 mph and a top speed lap of 107.2 mph. A record for twin cylinder machines which still stands today.

Later in 1973, Norton were invited by the Labour Government to take over the ailing BSA and Triumph concerns who were locked



into a bitter industrial dispute with workers taking over the Triumph Meriden Plant and starting their own co-operative. A slimmed-down race team contested the 1974 season with a heavier trellis framed bike, but it wasn't competitive and Peter crashed it disastrously at Oulton Park in August of that year.

Seriously injured with major damage to his left side and arm, Peter was lucky to have survived, but his racing days were over. However Peter's career as an engineer has continued successfully to the present day.

The owner of a large number of patents including recent designs for Carbon Fibre 'Clamshell Frames', Peter has been a key player in Lotus's 'EVO' Electric Racer designed to compete at the Isle of Man's new TTX GP

Peter told the meeting that he had agreed the previous week to join Stuart Garner's revitalised Norton Motors group and assist in their new bike design. He expressed the hope that he could persuade the new company to look at producing an Electric Bike in the future.

Although Peter confessed to not being very good with jokes, his sheer passion for Motorcycling and Motorcycle racing held this audience spellbound for almost an hour and occasioned lots of spontaneous and well deserved applause.

Branch Programme Secretary, Steve Eccleshall paid a tribute to Peter Williams as "The thinking man's motorcycle racer". "With more like him, the British Motorcycle industry would be a stronger position today"

Peter White



Peter Williams in 1973 on the Isle of Man

The Peashooter Guide

November

Sunday Nov 1st: - The London Motorcycle Museum host their 'Military Day' at 29 Olfield Lane, South Greenford, UB6 9LB just 5 minutes ride from the A40. Admission Fee includes Home-made grub and access to all the excellent Museum displays See: www.london-motorcycle-museum.org

Monday Nov 9th: - 8.00pm-10.45pm 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 Nov 13-15th: - The Classic Motor Show at the NEC, Birmingham, includes the dedicated Classic Bikes Hall with displays from the National Motorcycle Museum, concours competition. Entry covers the Car Motor Show and the MPH Performance Car Show. Call 0121 7672772 to enter your Bike or see www.classicbikesatclassicmotor.com. Tickets online or call 0871 2301088

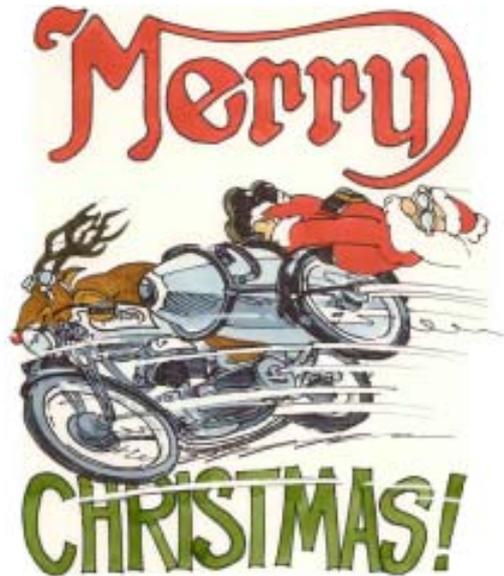
Saturday Nov 28th: - Kempton Park Autojumble at Kempton Park Racecourse: Admission £5.00 EGP Enterprises Tel 01344 883961

Monday Nov 30th: - Club Night at the Star with very Special Guest Speaker!!

We are very lucky to be visited by Mike Jackson, one of the senior men at Norton through the 70's in particular, responsible for overseas sales amongst other things, renowned speaker and President of the National Norton Owners Club!! does it get much better!!!! Please come along and join us!

December

Wednesday December 9th: - 6.00pm - 11.00pm Britbike night at The Ace Cafe with Triumph and RE Owners Clubs details www.ace-cafe-london.com or Tel: 0208961 1000



Monday December 28th: - Club Night at the Star.

As it's Christmas and we'll all hope to be full of Christmas cheer, this will be an informal night to bring your Norton along, (weather permitting) and have a natter with other members - Come along and join us!

COMMANDO TRANSFORMER



A number of members drew our attention to this superb animation on YouTube by Steve Twist, a student at Bournemouth University. As part of his (successful!) BA (Hons) Computer Visualisation and Animation degree he's created a timeless bit of Norton lore featuring our own Neil Shoosmith, the NOC's Spares supremo. If you've not seen it go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKqpvrIKZuA>

Gus Kuhn

Vincent Davey's talented daughter, Valerie has asked us to mention that she's created some new Gus Kuhn stickers. They are very similar to the original tank stickers, in the Norton type writing, white letters with a gold edging, about eight inches long (20cm). They are printed using full colour uv solvent inks onto white vinyl, laminated & contour cut to individual letters, then application taped to keep the letters spaced and together. She can provide alternative images for printing.

The Stickers are £6 each, plus UK P&P £1 per order and are available through the excellent Gus Kuhn website

(www.guskuhn.net) and on eBay.

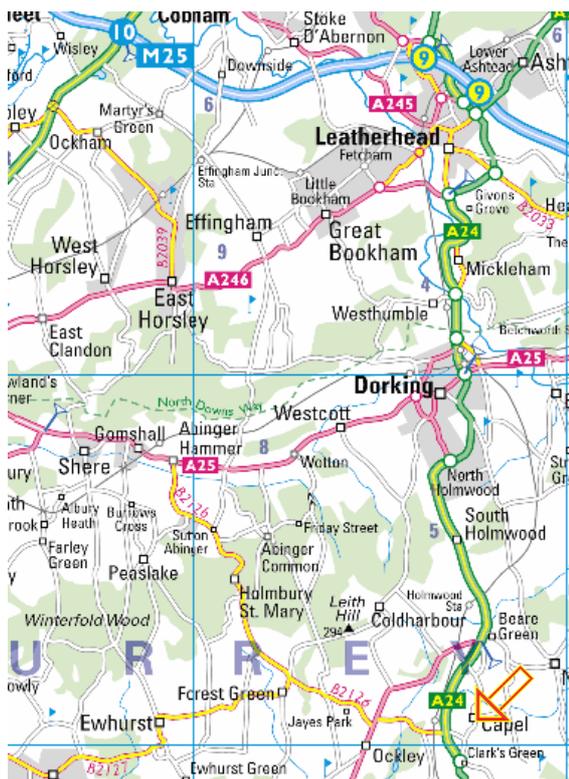
Riding out - with Surrey Branch

.Some months ago, intending with all good heart to have my Norton back on the road - by that, I mean reassembled from all its component parts littering my house - and using it to motivate me, I willingly offered to lead the Monday Clubnight RideOut on July 27th. Well of course like all good ideas it seemed months away and obviously it can't be too hard to get some spare hours and throw the Commando back together.....

Yep! No chance! So with only a week or two to go, I approached the mysterious committee to beg one of them to take my place as the only option I had was my Kawasaki, which despite being the honey she is, is a) not a Norton and therefore would not be appropriate as lead for a NOC Ride Out and b) has a number of electrical faults which I have yet to trace but frequently burn things out! The committee laughed and extolled me to 'man up' and take the abuse, but clearly the solitary tear rolling down my cheek got through to Treasurer Dick Thurley and in an act of unbridled kindness lent me his 750 Commando for the night! Now howabout that for support!! Now to be fair it's 3 years since a Norton and I shared the road and on collection day I was questioning, the heat, why I had not replaced my 19 year old skintight 100 degree leathers, the heat, and the vagaries of gear / brakes being on the 'right' side and not jap side! Oh yeah and the heat!

Dick assured me I would be fine and I rolled off nervously along his alleyway to the road where my partner sat in her car, as I approached I confidently dabbed the back brake, and managed to change from 1st gear into 2nd with no diminishing of speed and the rear of Claire's car approaching quickly - great not made it to the road and with Dick watching I am about to have a 'moment'!! But luckily, Claire must have smelt the fear and moved off quickly saving my blushes!! The ride home from Morden to Redhill was exhilarating!! And bike and I arrived in one piece - what a sweet bike to ride!

Now obviously, preparation is the key to success and with that in mind I went out a few days later to check the route from



Leatherhead to Capel, Surrey. It was a lovely dry, sunny, bright, afternoon and the route took in a variety of B roads and minor lanes and I actually remember thinking "yep no problems". On the night in question it had poured down most of the afternoon and only stopped about 7pm. I pitched up at The Star PH, nervous on someone else's bike, nervously trying to remember the route and then calming myself by realising that there were unlikely to be more than 5 - 6 bikes, so why pressurise myself! And then with a mixture of pride, joy and fear 17 fellow members arrived one after the other on a variety of Nortons - no pressure then! We left The Star about 7.45pm and set off towards Oxshott, around the back of Leatherhead and dropped down into Bookham.

It seemed to be working well with a constant procession of bikes behind me of all turning heads as we sedately passed through Surrey and sounding rather lovely too I might add! On through Bookham and then to Effingham where we crossed the A246 and dropped down in the direction of Abinger.

Now, Dear Reader, where these roads had been lovely, dry and clean several days previously, they were now strewn with gravel, sand and puddles, one such puddle was more like a ford and I admit to riding through it with some trepidation, expecting to go deep, hit a hole or even worse a brick! In addition the lanes I had chosen were high clay banked affairs with trees overlapping above making it like a tunnel - which is fine on a sunny bright dry afternoon, but daunting after rain in the twilight on a strange bike!!

We made it through Abinger, negotiating quite a steep, switchback set of bends with a funny camber - and gravel / sand / puddles - which focused my mind and handlebar grip somewhat and dropped down towards Ockley where I breathed a sigh of relief as we made it onto the B2126 and then onto the A29. This was a chance to 'stretch our legs' a bit, and I really appreciated the Norton's wonderful torque as I had the opportunity surge ahead a wee bit! Then through Capel Village and to the Crown pub where we were greeted by Steve Light on his lovely Triton, made to feel very welcome by the staff and at this point were joined by another NOCCER on a Rotary! Full House!!

After my nervous laughter died down and a few beers had circulated, the majority of the group had a spirited ride back up along the A24 to The Star where there were 6 - 7 'sans' bikes waiting for us. For my part I did enjoy the ride, and certainly enjoyed the bike - thanks Dick! It was good to get out, good to ride in a group of Nortons and good to matter! So I hope you can join us on another ride out! Check the website for detail!!

Steve Eccleshall

16H goes to Arnhem

During a quiet drink in a pub a couple of months ago, the topic of conversation turned to the 65th anniversary of Operation Market Garden to be held around the Arnhem area of Holland during the weekend of 19 September. Neil, a friend with a 2008 Bonneville, was considering driving there to visit the grave of Ronald Waltrich, the pilot of a Stirling bomber that blew up during the Battle of Arnhem and a close friend of his father Clive, who was in 196 Squadron and also flew Stirlings at the Battle.

As I had booked my two week holiday from work the weeks before and after the weekend in question, I thought it would be a good idea to ride a motorcycle there and what machine could be better than my 1940 Norton 16H. There was just one snag to the plan and that was the 16H was in bits as the timing side of the crank had failed due to metal fatigue at the woodruff key resulting in the stripping of the cam gears and half time pinion and breaking the inlet valve spring. She was being looked at by Tony Masters at The Motorcycle Workshop in Bolney and the timing for the trip looked a touch on the tight side. However, I had a contingency in my 1970 Triumph T120R, so agreement was reached to go for it.

Planning the trip required a couple more meetings at the local pub. We decided that we would try to follow the original route taken by Horrocks XXX Corps, starting at Neerpelt to the south of Eindhoven, then riding to Aalst, Son, St Oedenrode, Veghel, Uden, Grave, Nijmegen, Elst to Arnhem. The Channel Tunnel was booked for 1pm on Thursday 17 September, with return on Monday 21st. We proposed to travel as far as we could on the Thursday and Sunday, finding hotels during the journey somewhere between Bruges and Antwerp. We would take as little as possible, but I would need to carry spares as well as oil (SAE 50 isn't that easy to find).

As soon as I told Tony Masters about the planned trip, he thought it a great idea. Obtaining parts from Les Myers of Russell Motors, it wasn't long before the 16H was ready for the road again and the next couple of weekends were spent riding all around the south of England at around 40 mph to run in the repairs. A quick tighten up, oil change and timing adjustment and we were ready for the off. However, best laid plans somehow always go awry!

The evening of Wednesday 16th I took the bike to the local garage to fill up with fuel and on returning home discovered the brake light wasn't working. Time to panic! A check of the electricals pointed to a blown brake light switch. Unable to get into the Bakelite sealed unit I desperately phoned / emailed around for a replacement. Lots of suggestions from all around, but no switch. Chatting through with Neil, we decided to leave a bit earlier and drop in on Tony Masters to see if he could help, or if not call on Andy Cooke in Wivelsfield. Tony managed to find a replacement and had it wired and taped in quickly. We left him only 20 minutes later than our original plan, me leading, Neil following as I was on the slower machine. Five minutes later, just outside Haywards Heath, Neil pulled me over, the brake light wasn't working. This time only a faulty bulb, so a quick change and off to Tunbridge Wells where we managed to get lost, so called in at the Police Station for directions.

The trip to the Tunnel was uneventful from there on. Traffic was light and we made rapid progress to Ashford through the Kent Weald. Arriving sooner than we dared hope, we were waved through passport

control and were able to board an earlier train with a Harley rider travelling to a Harley convention in the South of France.

Off the train in France and immediately we encountered road works and traffic diversions. But the roads on the continent are far superior to those in England and it wasn't long before we were making a steady 50mph (I haven't got kph on my speedo) as we headed north towards Bruges. Weather was clear and warm, but there was a stiff breeze coming in from the coast which resulted in severe buffeting when large lorries overtook us. Just south of Bruges we stopped for a baguette break at a service station where the Norton received a lot of attention from other travellers.

Turning east at Bruges, we headed for Gent and with the wind now behind us speed increased to 55mph and we decided to try to reach Antwerp for the night. Arriving on the R1 ring road in



Antwerp during rush hour, progress was slow. We couldn't see any hotels, until we reached the A13 where we saw a sign for the City Inn Hotel, so we pulled off the road. They had a room for the night and also garage facilities for the bikes, so we booked in. There was no restaurant, but we were recommended to try one just down the road at 2140 Borgerhout. Well worth going to, the food was fantastic and the beer delicious!

A full English breakfast the next morning and we were ready for a good ride! A quick belt down the motorway and we reached Neerpelt. Nothing there we could find of interest and on to Son, Veghel and Uden where we got lost again. Grave was a lovely town. We stopped for lunch at a café by the river and watched a Dakota drop some parachutes over Nijmegen. Quiet roads led to Nijmegen where we were able to see and walk beside the bridge that wasn't blown up.

On from there to Arnhem. We arrived around 3pm and wandered around the river, walking over John Frost Bridge, visiting the Arnhem Museum and talking to some ex-paras of which there were many to be seen in the town. On to our hotel, the Papendal Arnhem which was situated some 3 miles out of town in wooded countryside and next to a golf course. A delightful location and a very good hotel. The food was to prove to be extremely good and

the company from the former paras was unbelievable. Everyone was so friendly.

Saturday dawned bright and warm. A hearty breakfast and off to Ginkel Heath, a dropping zone from the battle, to meet with other motorcyclists on old machines and see the planned drop of 1000 parachutes. Loads of people there to commemorate the 65th anniversary, I guess around 100,000, which shows how much was thought of our troops and this was only one event of many over the weekend. One English couple kindly provided a cup of tea from their camper van, which was most welcome. We met the Dutch military vehicle group with some 100 bikes, mainly 16Hs, BSA M20s, Enfields and Triumphs, as well as some other vehicles. I was short of oil by this time and they recommended a local Harley dealer to replenish my supply, or if that failed, they would give me some of theirs. It was only a short ride to the dealer where we were made most welcome despite the notice saying only Harley bikes could be parked there safely. Two litres of oil later and we were back on the road to the former Hartenstein Hotel, now museum.

Here we were able to park the bikes, walk around the grounds amongst the guns, tank and memorials. Loads of people remembering the battles 65 years earlier. We walked down to the old Tafelberg Hotel, which



was converted to a hospital during the fighting and on towards the Rhine, following the route that would have been taken as the remaining troops tried to evacuate when no help arrived. Such a different world now, and only thanks to them. We returned to Oosterbeek and as we were about to leave, a column of around 200 military vehicles from the 1940s went passed. Back on the bikes we rode to the old church, still heavily pock marked from shrapnel and on to the campsite where we again met our Dutch friends. They had taken over the area, each tent having at least one military vehicle outside. We were made very welcome and were introduced to Rob Van den Brink who must be the world expert on 16Hs and Big 4s. He loved my bike! Then it was a ride over the John Frost Bridge in both directions before returning to the hotel for a meal and a beer.

Sunday followed, our last day in Holland. A misty start, so much so that I needed to clean the visor every 400 yards or so. We went to visit the War Museum close to the zoo. A fantastic place, full of military hardware, uniforms and re-enactment scenarios. We spent the best part of 3 hours there. Then the road home.

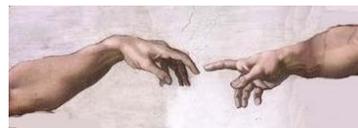
We travelled back via motorways and discovered how little time it takes to cover large distances. Arriving at Bruges around 4pm we decided to stay the night rather than head for Calais a day earlier than our train tickets. We found a good hotel some 20 minutes walk from the centre. No restaurant, but once in town there were so many good places to eat. Bruges must be one of the prettiest places to visit. Cobble streets, trees in parks, canals, good shops, old buildings, fantastic food and great beer – what more could you want.

Next morning after another good breakfast we hit the road to Calais. Arriving some 5 hours before our booked train, we managed to get onto

an earlier one. This was most welcome as we were tired by now. A pleasant journey back with a couple of blokes on an R1 and then we hit the motorways back to Horsham, with just a fuel stop at Clacketts. This was a brilliant long weekend trip. I certainly intend to go again. The people we met of all nationalities were wonderful, the roads smooth, the countryside clean and beautiful and the food and beer brilliant. It made long distance motorcycle riding a real pleasure. We've made a lot of new friends and we will visit them again.

Chris Barraclough

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EndPoint



Norton



The Missing Banner Mystery

Faces were even more than usually blank at the last Branch Committee meeting when Chairman Peter and Treasurer Dick told the unhappy tale of the missing branch banner...

"Er... well it's like this... It seems to have disappeared" said Peter... After half an hour of advanced detective work by the Committee, reminiscent of Hercule Poirot, no one was any the wiser. No less than four member's garages and a disabled Toilet have all been ransacked, a number of members closely questioned all to no avail.

Whilst we await the arrival of the esteemed Inspector Japp of Scotland Yard, a new banner has been ordered. ...

"Hopefully, said Dick, this will mean we have two! - More next month?"

Peashooter is printed and published by the Surrey Branch of the Norton Owners Club ,

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