THE SOURCE 03|2021

Dear Andover Norton Customer,

About to say "Spring is here!“ I look out of my home office window and see snowflakes drifting past. Here near the Alps, we have a long winter with short spells of early summer thrown in. The salt on the roads forbid motorcycle riding even on the warm, pleasant days. I did it as a university student and saw the Commando age visibly within the few months of winter!

With the ongoing chaos in EU freights, I still wait for parcels sent out to me from Andover on 25th January (I write this on 21st March!), though some later despatches have come in single parcels from various 3-7 parcel despatches delivered in stops and starts over periods of up to three weeks.

Thankfully not all freighters are as bad as DHL on the German end so other countries get their stuff as fast as before. All this costs me lots of time I had planned to spend on private projects in the workshop. Very frustrating!

That said, I made minimal progress on my pre-war Inter Racer and encountered a problem I have been familiar with ever since the BMW agency I was a partner in in the years 1985-89 rebuilt wheels for private and trade customers.

Lacing up wheels

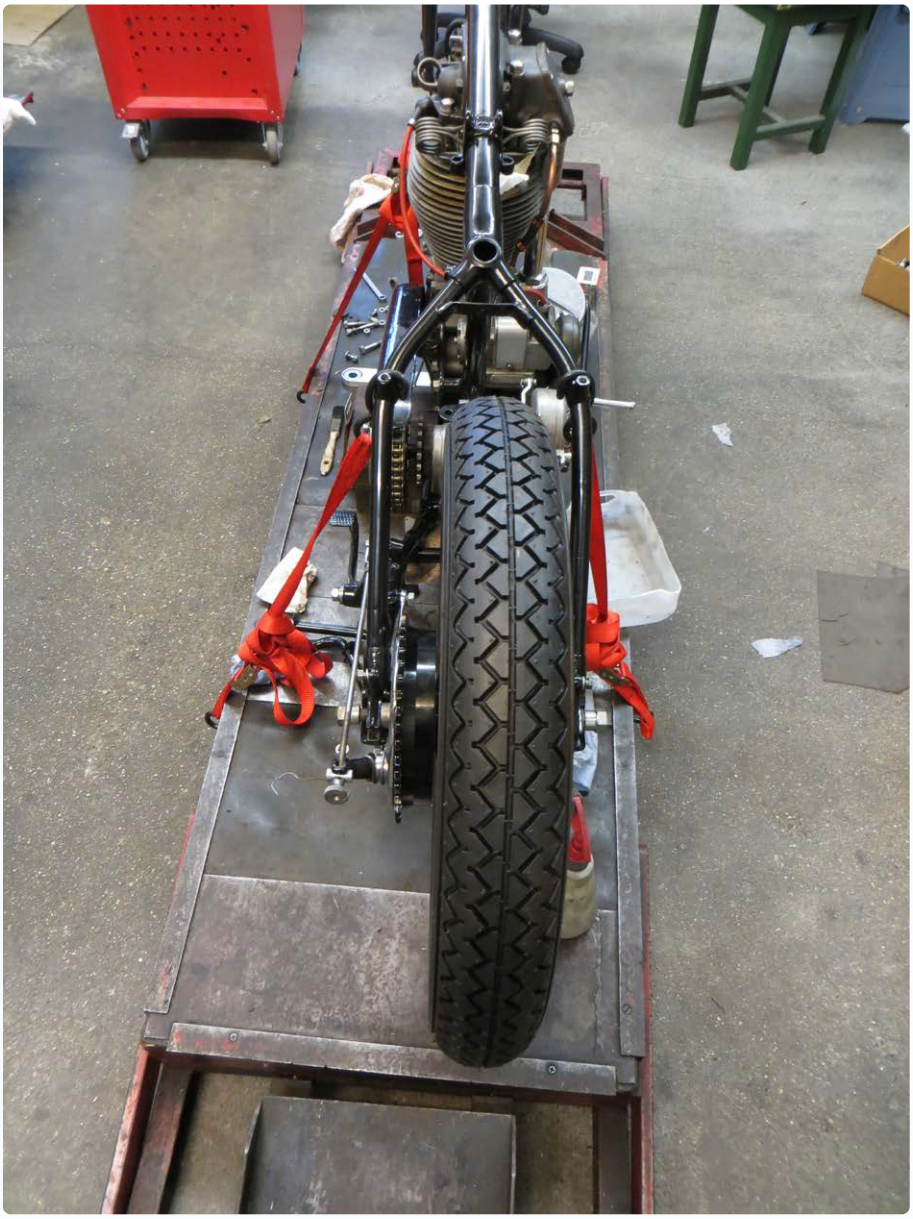
Whenever people brought a wheel in to be fitted with new spokes and/or rims we asked them if they knew if the rim was offset against the hub and/or had measured it. Most did not know, automatically assuming rims are always central to the hub.

This is true for some wheels, but not for all. The Norton full-width hubs are basically central, and yours truly naively fell for the idea that was also the case for the rear “spool” hub of the pre-war Inter because the spacers, spindles etc are very similar to the full-width hubs.

Very wrong, as I then found, my only excuse being that the wheel taken out of the crashed bike did not lend itself to measure offset!

After straightening the rear hub spoke flange on one side, re-painting the hub and fitting it with new bearings, getting new spokes, a rim, and having the centres painted and lined I gave all components to Irma Kronester, the lady who organizes the “Grab the Flag” racing series and who runs a motorcycle workshop, and asked her to lace the wheel up central to the hub.

Keen to progress with the rebuild I fitted a new racing tire and put the wheel into the (now straightened) frame. My mistake was instantly obvious:



Only then did I ask Otto Ziegler, who specializes in pre-war racers if he had a drawing how to lace the wheel up and he came up with one instantly!

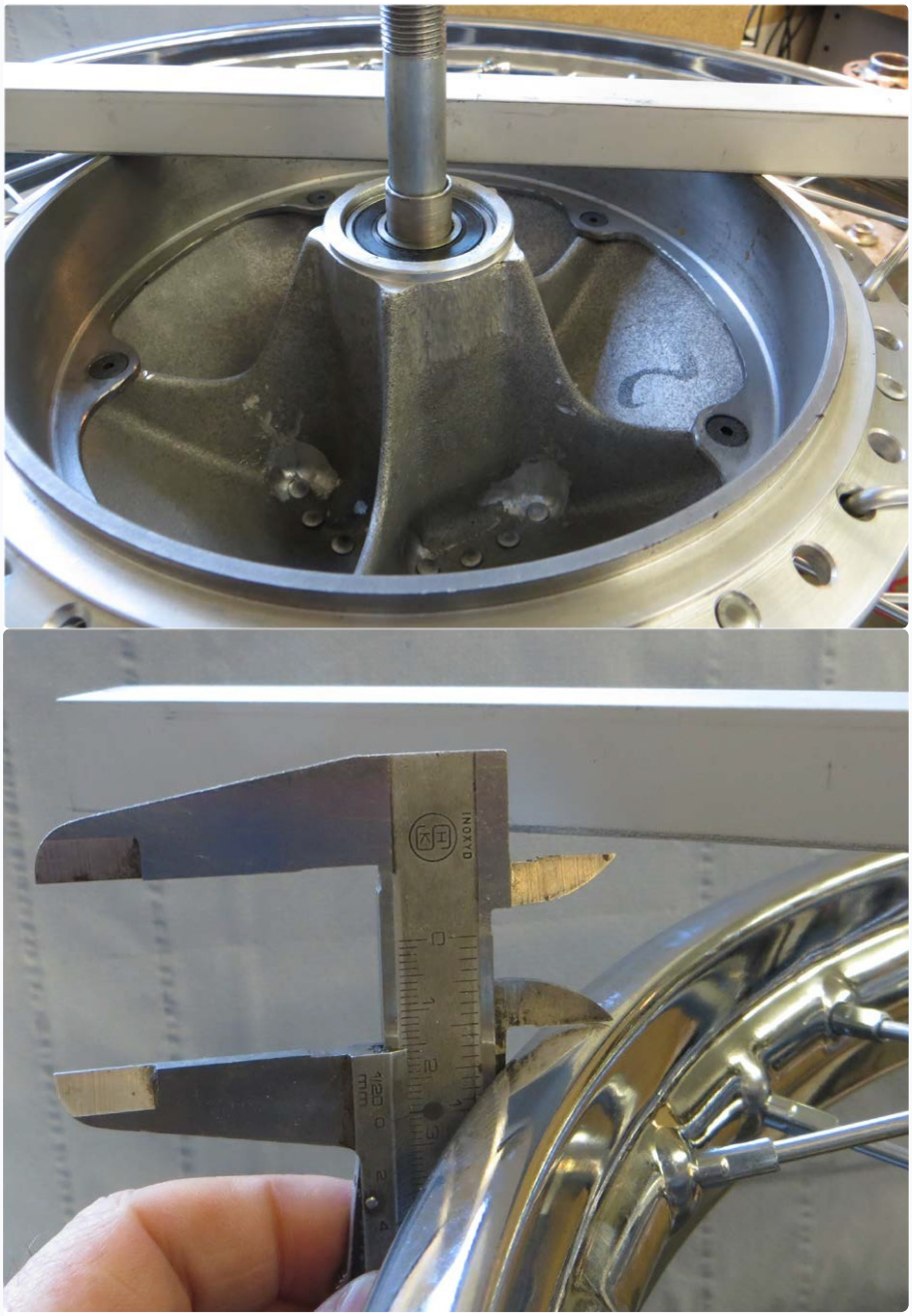
The front wheel is a different but then similar story. I got a new front hub because mine was totally distorted by the bike somersaulting at full speed. This new hub is an “update”, replica of the early post-war Manx brakes manufactured by a German racer/engineer that can be retrofitted to pre-war racers which had practically no brakes.

I got the rim and spokes laced up to rough dimensions from CWC and, fitting it with all the spacers that had meanwhile been made and adapted for it I found the wheel slightly out in relation to the

steering head.

After test-fitting and taking the dimensions I had to get it apart to get the rim centre painted and lined so the offset can be corrected when the wheel is laced up again.

Taking the rim as a given dimension I normally use a straight metal square tube and then measure from a defined plane of the hub down to the outer edge of the rim.



If, as in this case, that dimension is currently wrong I measure where to go with the offset in the bike and re-calculate the distance tube/edge of rim.

Not as nice and/or scientific as the drawing I got off Otto, but in the past this has always done the trick for myself and our customers.

So how can you proceed if all you have is a basket case and no information about the wheels?

Basically the front wheel has to run true to the steering head. The rear wheel has to run true to the frame backbone starting with the centre of the steering head.

Easy on pre-war “bicycle frame” bikes, or on bikes sporting a central spine tube like a Commando. More difficult on twin top tube frames like featherbeds etc.

By the way: One of the most off-set spoked wheels I encountered is the disc front wheel of Commandos. The spokes on the disc side run virtually straight down to the hub, thus the other side is the more tilted over.

Workshop Information on the web

With Andover Norton now being the biggest active player in the classic Norton field by far and with our team consisting of two active Commando riders, Simon and Ashley, as well as myself, rider of everything Norton built between 1937 and 1998, we have a constant demand for our technical knowledge and support.

This is getting a bit too much for us considering we have by definition quite different functions in the company. Simon and Ashley are our buyers and I run one of the biggest distributorships of Norton parts worldwide single-handedly.

After the retirement of Ella and Fred of Old Britts, deservedly hailed for Fred's technical section in their homepage, this will, with kind permission from Fred, be integrated in our homepage. Add various features we other three wrote for the "Source". The "Technical Support" section of the Andover Norton homepage will be starting from mid-April onwards.

So as soon as that is up can we please ask all customers looking for information on how to do a certain job to first have a look into that new section before you stop us from looking after parts requirements from all over the globe?

We plan to put up pages on all aspects from how to fit a new rear chain to how to modify a 1972/73 crankcase so it actually works, i.e. all levels from easy amateur to specialist stuff.

And, yes, some lacing information will also be included!

Out Of Stock Request

Just a quick reminder, should we be out of stock of an item you require, either Norton or Triumph parts, you can request an email notification when the item becomes available.

You will need to make sure you are logged in on our Website for this to appear.

When an item is advised as "out of stock" click on the description content to enlarge the image and information. At the foot of this image is an icon with the message:

"Accept Data Privacy and receive an email, when the item is back in stock"

By clicking on the circle you should receive the message.

"Ok! You will receive an email, when the product is back in stock."

This means that the request is now been set and you will be

emailed when the product is available again.

Commando Service - Simon

One dry and sunny weekend I am preparing my 1972 Commando Combat for Spring riding. Engine oil and filter are to be renewed, as well as primary chaincase oil. Chain tension can be checked at the same time.

Engine oil is changed annually - irrespective of mileage. The engine sump plug and oil tank drain plug are removed. As usual I spill oil on the drive!

The hose clip securing the filter is corroded and can’t be removed with a screwdriver

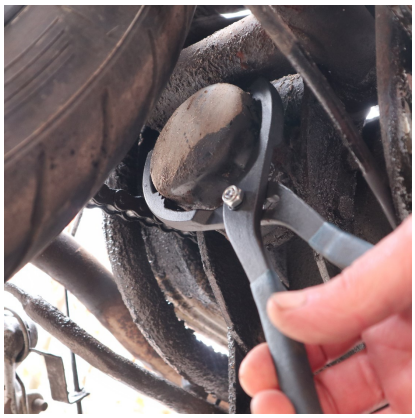
Shop

Clip is cut with a grinder & removed.

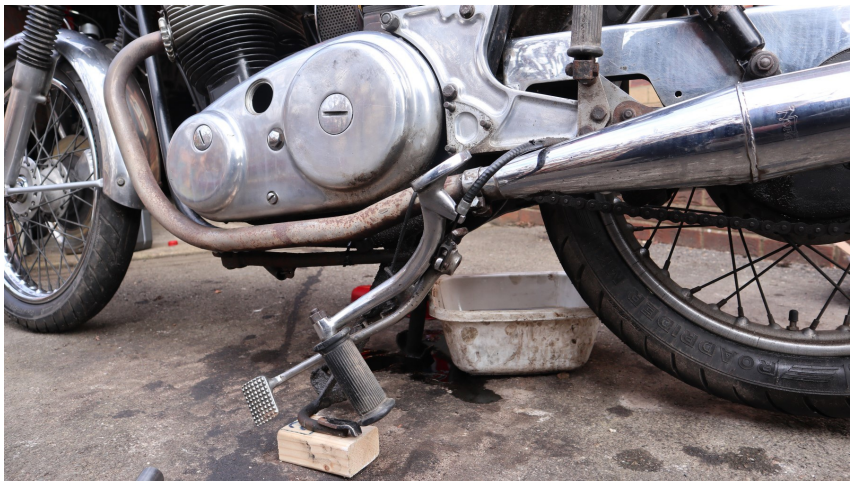
Shop

Filter tool loosens the filter.

Shop



The area around the filter housing is cleaned & a new filter fitted. I refill with 5 pints of Comma 20w50 mineral oil.



A wooden block under the centre stand leg leans the bike to help drain the oil tank. Left side footrest and brake pedal are removed to access the primary drive cover.

With the cover off & oil drained, I check tension is an easy 3/8”, also the condition of the chain. Avoid an overtight chain.

Shop

Oil is added until it drips from the level hole. I use 20w fork oil which is lighter than 20w50

Featured Products

"Meriden-Historical Summary" 1972-74, 37 pages

Please note: Limited Stock Available

Shop

OIL FILTER TOOL

Shop

CAM CHAIN TENSIONER (RUBBER-FACED)

Shop

Calendar Pictures

We are still on the look out for pictures for next years Andover Norton Calender.

So please send in your best quality pictures of your bike along with a brief history to newsletter@andover-norton.co.uk

That's all for now, until next time!

The Team at Andover Norton