



Dear Andover Norton Customer,

May was busy as usual, but the main event this last month was our Open Day on 20th May.

We were all looking forward to it though as it is a lot of work for the ANIL staff and a lot to organize for our MD Karl.

All my family but me had not seen the new premises yet as the last Open Day they all attended was in 2019, pre-Covid, and still in our old premises in Brunel Gate. This time all flew in from the Continent, Christine from Geneva, Katrin and the youngest attending family member Alina (our photo model from the last source after missing last year's Open Day) from Frankfurt, and Tim, Renate and I from Munich.

To say they were impressed by what they saw is an understatement. Though all had seen pictures, the unit and its contents in real life made them incredibly proud and grateful for the work Karl and the team have put into making the place what it now is.



*Five of the six members of the owning family, Katrin, Christine, Alina (with hat), Joe and Renate. First time we foolishly forgot to take a family photo at our Open Day!*

Recalling the few racks with parts I bought in 2007 with the company I acquired from BSA/Regal, even I am impressed. Not by the sheer quantities in stock and our turnover, but by the far greater range of parts we now have compared to 16 years ago.

Karl confessed he had woken up at 4am that morning wondering what he had missed or overlooked in organizing the day. Karl, that was completely unnecessary, everything was perfect. And the praise also applies to our team and helpers who did what needed doing, unasked, and in a friendly and happy vein.



*Masses of motorcycles and motorcyclists, my wife wondered if the food stand had enough to feed them all!*

So whoever missed the day should rue it, it was probably the best and biggest event in the Norton/Triumph world this year.

We had some prominent visitors: Mike Jackson, ex-Norton sales manager in Commando times and ex-owner of ANIL; Bob Rowley, ex-tester and later Head of Production in the Norton/Shenstone rotary era; Angela Hemmings (introduction superfluous); Norman White (ditto); Basil Knight, draughtsman and designer, JPN Norton; Pete Lovell, to date the joint fastest man on a Commando in 24 hours, Tony Holland, Al Tritten, decade-long editor of "Roadholder" and old friend of our family; Mick Duckworth, respected classic motorcycle journalist and author; "Big Frank" Westworth, another well-known classic motorcycle journalist, Nick Hopkins and Phil Albutt, both ex-MDs of Andover Norton, and last but not least Valerie Davey, daughter of Vincent Davey and granddaughter of Gus Kuhn.



*Mick Duckworth and Big Frank Westworth*



*Angie Hemmings, no doubt just telling me what we did wrong this time!*



*Pete Lovell, fastest man for 24 hours on a Norton Commando built by Richard Negus with co-rider Pete Davies, Spa 1973, talking with Mick Duckworth.*

The greatest surprise was the legendary, i.e. known to regular readers of the "Source", "Fast Fraaaaaaaaaaaaaanzi" Edlfurtner, master baker, friend and racing comrade for many years who rode from his home in Penzberg near the Alps to Andover in a day, attended our Open Day, and rode back on Sunday, all on his trusty Commando 850Mk3, a total of about 1,600 miles. He was deservedly applauded by Angie Hemmings who said "I respect you!", something I have waited to hear from her for decades and that I probably never will.



*Fast Fraaaaaaaanzi discussing bathrooms(!) with Tim Seifert. They are both in the middle of building projects, you see.....*

Bob Rowley told me details about Norton rotary versus Triumph 5-Speed gearboxes they derived from but as usual I could only partly follow his technical details and again suspected he mistakes me for a qualified engineer. Sorry I am not but my son Tim is. The fact I was described as “engineer” on my Rotary Service School Certificate was incorrect and none of my doing, Bob!



*Bob Rowley, tester, later Head of Production at Norton Motors in Shenstone. One of a few unsung heroes of the Norton rotary racing days, a technical mastermind behind the scenes whose work made the success of the race team possible.*

A slight irritation was the very loud roar of an interesting project, a couple of rotary-engined Speedway bikes, but as one of the mails I received after the event correctly said: “far too long and far too noisy”. Not a great surprise then the owner later told me one of his problems to get permission to run the beasts was the noise output.



*Yes, you could see a cloud of smoke from far away, and the noise was incredible!*

The person I had hoped to see and who then did turn up was Valerie Davey.

Over the years I had exchanged mails with her, starting with an enquiry about my own Production Racer that I knew came from Gus Kuhn, to various other matters and, most recently, several mails regarding our ex-Gus Kuhn racebike.

When Ashley started the bike up for her she was happy to hear the familiar sound of a Commando racer again, having been to many long-distance events with the Gus Kuhn team in the 1970s. She told me many an interesting and amusing anecdote from those days, a few of which I'll save for another "Source".



*Valerie Davey with dog- not the one from last month's "Source", though!- and the Gus Kuhn racer in its current, middle-of-rebuild state.*

Valerie has also compiled a very good webpage for Gus Kuhn motorcycles with many pictures and information:

<http://www.guskuhn.net/GKMLtd/GusKuhnMtrsLtd.htm>



*Alina guarding her bikes*

Since the team had heard one of our granddaughters was coming they had prepared the “Mini-Nepomuk” kiddie bike as well as a wooden bike to straddle along on, both of which Alina immediately took possession of and happily used. The motorcycle we didn’t dare start up, remembering the time when her mother was a bit older than her now. I put her mother on our then BSA JTX kids bike, and Katrin opened the throttle wide, I could not hold the 1.5bhp, and she crashed into a wooden fence head-on. So volunteers pushed Alina around on it. A video made of her shows she eagerly works the twistgrip!



*Kids queueing to sit on “Mini-Nepomuk”*

Seeing the little motorcycle other children who had come to the Open Day actually queued to sit on it, but first we had to convince Alina that this was o.k. and they weren't going to steal what she later called "my motorcycle" from her.

After a long and very rewarding day we went back to our hotel where we met Karl and Mel Smith, Phil and Tree Albutt and Ashley and Denise Cutler for a long and pleasant dinner, discussing the day as well many other things before the family left for Heathrow the next morning.



*Goodbye, Andover! See you next year!*

## **Our Bikes**

### **Joe's 1998 C652 press bike:**

As predicted by our reader Gino Rondelli, the oil seals of the water pump spindle were shot. Indeed, when I drained the system, a lot of foreign matter appeared that we have no explanation for, so I thought "no problem, I'll take the primary cover off and replace the oil seals!" Since the problem never occurred in the last 25 years, nobody noticed that the late Dave Pearce of Tigcraft had constructed the chassis so one screw of the primary cover sits behind a frame tube. Which means to basically loosen the front subframe to get the engine forward to get at that screw. Loosen the engine also means to pull the swinging arm spindle which runs through the engine behind the gearbox... A rather adventurous construction was used to keep the sad remains of the bike upright.



*No way could I get at that allen screw. Even if, it was too long to be taken out.*



*Enterprising system to suspend main frame and to maneuver the subframe with the engine!*





*When taken out the oil pump spindle, plain when new, showed where the oil seals had run. No great surprise the oil seals gave up!*

Now everything is back in the engine and the engine fixed in the main frame. More anon!

### **Joe' s Norton F1 Sports**



*Fancy taking all this out? I don't!*

After getting everything together to start a test ride the bike would only run on full choke, even after I had remembered to fill the SU carb domes with damping oil. Our rotary man Paul reckons the o-rings in the carb inlet pipes and idle pipes have had it after only 31 years so the next job, and one I am not looking forward to, is to get the whole intake system off, to clean it and to fit new o-rings.

### **Joe's Signal Orange Roadster**

The gearbox played up recently in that I sometimes had to get the gear lever back into its normal position and quick gear changes became impossible. The "roadside method" to work on the gearbox without loss of oil was used and the bike put on its left side.



*Roadside repair method applied in the workshop.*

And indeed, when I took the outer cover off only a few drops of oil escaped, the rest had run into the main gearbox housing.

My suspicion that spring [04.0479](#) had either broken or worn showed to be incorrect though signs of wear could be felt, so I replaced it, The normal weak link, spring [04.0038](#) was in perfect condition after now at least 25k miles but [04.0024](#) showed wear on both sides, one side looking especially worn.



*On my way home tonight everything worked again as it should so the gear selector pawl was most probably the cause of my problem.*



### **Ashley's bike:**

This has had a good heat test recently on the way home from AN. The traffic was real heavy on one of the major road interchanges on the route home, a normal traffic black spot easily overcome by filtering through the lanes, then open road the rest of way. Recent water main repair in a local village nearer home created a further 8 miles of queues and this was on B roads where oncoming rush hour traffic prevents overtaking or filtering. Sadly these days Google maps knows the back roads as well as I do and these are often blocked with traffic. Tickover started to drop as the carbs warmed a little more than usual, this might also been made more noticeable for the seasonally adjusted E10 that I use vapourising to quickly. Once home the bike was stinking hot but still leak free running.

## **A recent Observation by Ashley:**

A customer when setting up the Tri Spark found that he was a constant 10 degrees out though claiming it was set up correctly. I quickly set one up on the MK3 we have here and found no issues in doing so and led lit at the mid slot position. The Tri Spark is an excellent ignition system but there have been different back plates over the ages. Despite the fact you may have fitted one of these in the past, it is real important that you follow the instructions that come in the kit. On the red back plates you will find some lettering which can vary, this is what you should be using on the red plates

Where A & B are shown on the plate, the kit is directional, so you use B for the Commando to set the magnetic rotor.



[Shop](#)

Where AC (Anticlockwise / counter clockwise) & CW (clockwise) are shown, then use AC for the Commando to set the magnetic rotor.

The kits are real simple to fit, and leave you wondering if you have missed something. Despite the number of kits we have sold there has not been one sold from us that failed to work, returned kits get tested on the test box and on my bike to ensure that they will rev continuously, but there is one thing that is critical to correct operation and that is the gap from rotor to stator plate it has to be correct otherwise the system will not function correctly.

If the gap is too large and you chance that it will work because the bike has actually started your elation will be short lived as quick as it takes the revs to rise and it starts to misfire.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/mLm-mk0XJ1A?feature=share>

## **Payment for parts.**

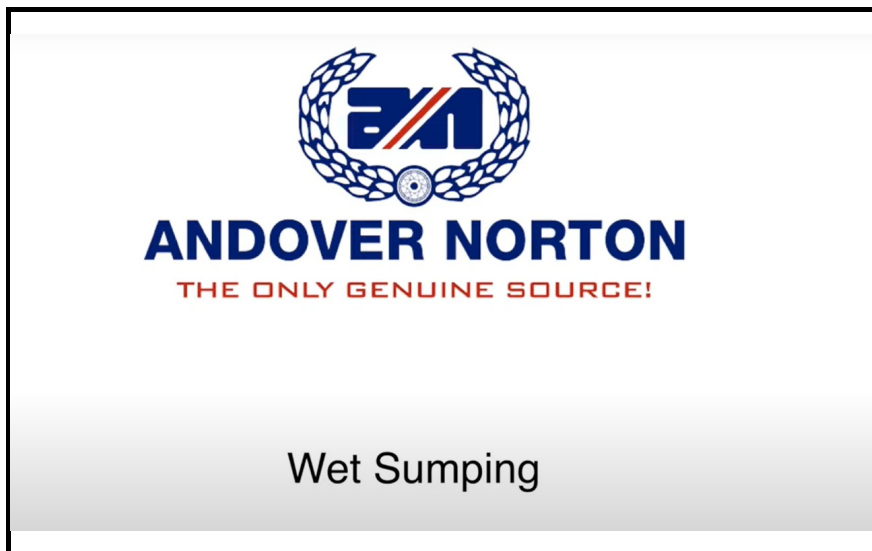
We still get many owners that want to order parts via the phone believing that it is the quickest way to get their parts shipped, in fact it is the slowest way to get your parts. By the time the call has finished there can be half a dozen orders on the system picking list whilst the call is taking place. Orders are picked in the order they are placed on the system.

As you can see the above is not the best way to order and this can be further complicated by callers not knowing what type of card they using to pay with, despite the long number, the expiry date and the CVC code the most important bit is 'what type of card are you using' the numbers do not work without the correct type of card. If the card type is not correct and the phone rings with another owner placing a telephone order the original order gets put to one side whilst the new call is being dealt with and potentially another order being placed in front of the original callers order.

Please remember the quickest way to order is via the website, orders go directly to the picking list queue. On a busy Monday the technical lines will ring about every 5 mins or so, we deal with queries globally by phone and email, and if it's busy some telephone orders will get put on the picking system later in the day.

## **Recent Videos**

Ashley has just completed two videos, one for the sump strainer with additional drain bolt. This enables the sump to be drained without repeated removal of the original drain bolt in the aluminium crankcase. The other video is about the tacho housing with lipped seal and how to assemble the drive spindle and housing prior to fitting to the crankcase.





## ANDOVER NORTON

THE ONLY GENUINE SOURCE!

### Your Tachodrive Questions

#### Simon's Bit

Simon's renovation of his 1972 Commando 750 Combat is proceeding well. With the recent warm and sunny weather, the bike has moved from the spare room to the garage, where the mudguards, wheels, brakes, and gearbox have been fitted. The chrome parts are back from the platers and looking suitably shiny. Next job is to re-install the engine.



Simon's technique to fit the engine involves a pair of easily made wooden stands, as the bike must be supported without the centre stand. The stands fit under each rider footrest rubber. Two metal car stands support the rear wheel axle for extra security.

The engine is lifted into place while an old bath towel protects the frame tube paintwork. The three rear engine bolts are fitted, and a bottle jack is located under the engine to hold its weight. The front isolastic engine mount (with shims) has already been assembled and adjusted. It is raised in place as a complete unit from below the bike and bolted in place. The temporary stands are removed and the

Commando rests again on its centre or prop stand.



In the first week of June the oil tank hoses and spin on filter head have been installed. New piston rings were test fitted into the barrel so the end gaps could be checked. The pistons were heated with a hot air gun, put on to the connecting rods and secured with new circlips. After lubricating the pistons, ring compressors were used while the barrel was lowered onto the crankcases with its new base gasket.

Next jobs: fit the cylinder head, Amal Concentric carb set and the air filter assembly



## **Andover Norton Calendar 2024**

We are fast approaching our deadline for entries for our 2024 Calendar. So if have not sent us your pictures yet, you have until the **31st July** to do so!

As before, we are looking high quality pictures of your bike (with or without rider!) along with a brief history including model and year as well as any restoration or modifications you might have made.

Please send your pictures to [newsletter@andover-norton.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@andover-norton.co.uk) for a chance to be featured in Next Years Calendar.

**Wishing all of readers  
"Happy Riding!"**

**The Team at Andover Norton**



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