



Dear Andover Norton Customer,

Autumn is with us in my part of the globe, leaves are falling and I am currently compiling a list of things that need to be done on my bikes cover the winter. But first:

Obituary Phil Read

As some of you may dimly remember apart from seven (for us) rather unimportant world championship titles Phil was also a rider of the John Player Norton Team in the 1970s, alongside Peter Williams, Dave Croxford, and others.



Phil Read aboard an early JPN, still with single disc.

Peter Williams writes in his book that the late Phil found riding what was basically tuned production motorcycles after (and before) riding full-blown Grand Prix machines not very exciting. I suspect the fact racers have to pay for their daily bread had something to do with it, and no doubt he was on good money since he was the perfect advertisement for John Player Tobaccos and Norton. Great successes he did not have on the JPN Nortons, but, contrary to Peter Williams, he tended to leave the gearboxes in one piece.

Peter had constant gearbox troubles. Whether the reason was that Phil was easier on the box, or whether, as Norman White suspects, because Phil rode with twin front discs whilst Peter probably changed down to let engine and gearbox support his braking, thus overstressing the gearbox mainshaft, is open to speculation.



Phil and Peter did discuss how to ride these bikes differently to proper racers, PJW writes.

I have never spoken with Phil Read but saw him ride in one of our "Grab the Flag" events where he was on a 350/4 someone had lent him.

Phil wasn't the most popular person. However, Angela Hemmings writes: *"He had his faults but this hate thing for Read has been generated by people who have never met him, never experienced these awful things...in fact know nothing about him, but have just 'heard'" and goes on to say: "He was one of the most natural and stylish acers... better than Ago."*

Phil's death is quite definitely a loss for our motorcycle world. Another hero of our youth gone. My condolences to his family.

Parts back in stock

A part that just came in after several weeks of being unavailable is the rocker oil feed pipe [06.5561](#). That reminded me of the first meeting with the then management of ANIL just after I bought the company in 2007. At that time this part had been unavailable for over 18 months. I was met with astonished disbelief when I stressed that the absence of a popular Commando part was unacceptable for me and that I expected the responsible parties to change the situation pdq. Remember these were normal times, no shortages of raw materials, no complications through Covid or Brexit, and then as now no lack of funds available from the company owners. How things have changed!

Finding of Suppliers

Many of our suppliers we have had for a very long time. In fact some used to supply Norton in Commando production times! However, with company owners retiring and either selling the company or closing it altogether, also with some materials that were in common use in the 1970s but are now either no



Above: Travelling in Style. Our MD Karl decided against the Andover Norton Lear Jet that is waiting fully fuelled up in Thruxton and took the train, being environmentally conscious. However, the seats were all taken, hence.....

longer available or only in metric dimensions supply is a constant challenge for our buyers, so is finding new suppliers for price or quality reasons.

I therefore asked Karl and Ashley to go to the Cologne Motorcycle Show, once the world leader in shows for the trade in that not only the usual motorcycle manufacturers' stands were there but, far more importantly, the global mass of suppliers of components. Both went but I hear the train that took them from Frankfurt to Cologne wasn't all that comfortable. Not only are German trains normally packed but the day they went was the German Reunification Day with a bank holiday and half the population travelling the country...

I since heard their trip was successful even though, like all shows these days, many an exhibitor don't bother to go anymore, be it because Covid and borders make it complicated to get themselves and their wares there, or because they shy back from the considerable costs of a show stand.

Ashley's bit

With the arm still being troublesome, I have not ridden since the end of July. It is getting better but is taking some time which apparently is normal for tendon and muscle damage. My bike has been ridden though by our driver Don who has vast experience on Japanese bikes but none on Norton so this was the first time on a Commando, a short run down to Thruxton was enough for him to reluctantly hand the bike back having enjoyed the ride.

As above, I attended the Intermot show in Cologne, it can be seen that Karl got the 1st Class seat - I had to stand. However the journey was still an easy one and quick as well considering the other options. The show itself was mainly for finished products and is the level above what we were are looking for, however some leads were made that should prove fruitful. If anyone thinks high end bikes are the way ahead they are truly deluded, the German brand Horex had an unveiling and for the two days we were there, their stand was practically empty of visitors*. The Royal Enfield and Triumph stand

were constantly busy, other stands were busy as well including the Chinese made bikes, but one thing was noticeable was the large number of electric bikes.

I have a need for a commuter that will be used in all weather and all year due to some serious road upgrades due to take place, now what I was asking for was seemed like the Holy Grail, a scooter commuter that is sub 6K and capable of 80mph, cruise at 60mph and a range of 80 miles. Sadly I was laughed at one stand but someone on another stand kindly explained why that does not exist at the moment, interesting to see how the top end E bikes cost what they do and the lower end city scoots cost what they do, getting something in the middle is not that simple at the moment.



Norton was not present, but whilst there we got the launch date email for a motorcycle due to be unveiled, maybe the timing did not work for them but hopefully soon we will see some wider attendance at shows.

Overall one that stood out is that quality of all the bikes there looked good no matter what make, but one E bike manufacturer seems to have lost the plot with an E bike that had its frame on display, the complete bike was not heavier than an Interstate but it took me and Karl to lift the frame - what a step backwards and an indication of just how good a design the Commando frame was back in its day.

Over the next few weeks we will be planning our attendance at shows and exhibitions as both customers and exhibitors. We would also like to get out to meet club branches and attend some runs, and this is not just limited to Norton Owners Club branches and events. Ideally we like to focus on events where there are younger riders of other makes, as we need to keep the interest in Norton alive and if we kindle a spark in a youngster maybe in future years they will become owners of Nortons when life and cash allows.

**The German "Horex" is very much a fringe marque even in Germany. The general motorcycling public takes no notice of these which are made in miniscule quantities and vainly try to exploit the tiny niche once filled by the Muenchs. - Joe*

Race in Rijeka

My main motivation was to test the TX750 racer that had run successfully on the dyno and was now ready to go out on track. I also took my trusty 1960 Manx with me to see if the magneto repair had been successful, given the fact the mag wasn't rewound as it probably

should have been since the man who used to do it for my friend Hebsch is no longer with us.



My TX- the first one of at most ten ever built, evaluation bike of Norman White in '73

The other two riders were "Fastback" Fraanzi with his 750 Commando racer and Ralph with his 500 Dommi. Everything was fine but for my Manx that played up and at first ran fine but then, getting warmer, started to misfire in higher revs. A typical sign of a duff magneto. But just to puzzle me on the third day in training it started to run as it should after a few laps only to practically die a couple of laps later, just after I had started to hope I could start in the second race after missing the first one.



Starting my 1960 Manx. It carried Rudi Glaeser to 2nd Place in the 1961 German 500cc national championship after he won it, on another Manx, in 1960.

Fraanzi and Ralph rode both races. Ralph changed his gearing on the second day because he found the bike revved to high at the end of the long straight. Both had enjoyable races with long duels with competitors. Fraanzi was once seriously fast but since the 750 class is now dominated by full-blown Fours that have at least a third more horsepower than a Commando the Olympic spirit is what counts.



Joe (TX750 & Manx), Ralph (500 Dommi), Fast Fraaaanzi (750 Commando)

My TX750 ran fine on the first and half the second day until, changing down at the end of the long start/finish straight, Franzi saw a cloud of smoke come out and I, realizing something wasn't quite right, parked the bike at the side of the track. We later briefly started it on the rollers and, though the engine sounds fine, smoke comes out the breather. A broken piston ring, perhaps? We will enquire.



Beautiful evening after a day of enjoying ourselves on the track.

My Signal Orange Roadster

The German MOT (TUV) was due on all our bikes. The family have now streamlined this to one date every other year. No great problems until the MOT examiner asked to see if my front and rear brake switch work on my daily transport. Now, given I rarely travel behind myself, or rather my Commando, I was as surprised as he was that my front brake switch had had it.

Since the front brake is the important one on a motorcycle, and since it often gets used without the rear, I must have been braking without warning those behind me for some time. Hence my advice: Check your lights including the brake light regularly.

Andover Norton Calendar 2023

As is our normal tradition, our 2023 Calendar featuring the Nortons and Triumphs of you, our valued customers and readers, is nearly here!



Thank you to everyone who submitted pictures to be featured, as always we had a great selection to choose from! Don't forget we are always looking to take submissions for future calendars, so feel free to send us more!

Pre-orders have opened and we will start shipping them out as soon as they arrive!

[Shop](#)

**Wishing all of our readers,
“Happy riding!”
The Team at Andover Norton**



Andover Norton International Ltd

Unit 6 Wooler Park, North Way, SP10 5AZ, Andover

This email was sent to {{contact.EMAIL}}
You've received this email because you've subscribed to our newsletter.

[Unsubscribe](#)

