



Dear Andover Norton Customer,

November was yet another busy month. It looks as if the Norton and Triumph owners prepare themselves for the Christmas period and plan to work on their bikes! I write this at the evening of a Monday that saw me working on sizeable orders that showed the respective customers had thought long and hard about a complex repair or restoration and compiled a long list of the necessary components before they ordered.

We again introduced new items to restore the pre-Commando models and from personal experience in my German shop, I am happy to say all our new offerings are being ordered by our customers virtually as soon as we list them.

Sometimes I am amazed how quickly people find out now, even though we have practically stopped promoting the new items bar mostly just listing them on the webshop.

Donington Era Spares

Looking at the various forums on the net, I see many owners of the Donington bikes complain about the lack of support by Norton Motorcycles now that their hero has “left the building”.

Interestingly, neither the press, nor a Club has asked Dr. Hentschel the obvious question that would no doubt get an honest answer by Norton’s new CEO: what is with spares support for Donington era motorcycles?

From what I hear the situation for the new Norton Company owned by TVS is not as easy as they might like it to be. I understand there are virtually no records, not of what component was made by what supplier and to what specification, nor conclusive production records of the few hundred bikes produced, or records of what modifications and/or component changes were introduced and when.

During the “Donington Period” we heard reports of bikes delivered to customers having parts of earlier versions of the same model; of “new” motorcycles delivered that then turned out to be motorcycles returned to the manufacturer by a disgusted buyer earlier, the most prominent being the late Bob Trigg, who told me his Donington 961 was “the worst motorcycle I have ever had”.

When the house of cards finally came down the leftovers were a pile of undocumented hardware that might actually be dangerous. Let’s face it, the Garner “factory” was lacking finance, engineering know-how, and worst, scruples. Drawings got either lost or probably never existed for many key components. To cite an ex-Norton manager “they were playing at making motorcycles”.

Shortly after Garner had started, Andover Norton had to prove to our suppliers we had nothing to do with the company of similar name that very soon got a reputation in the industry for not paying their bills.

Hence suppliers changed every time a bill was due, normally for the worse in quality. Since records don't exist, and quality control was unheard of in Donington, these leftover parts cannot be offered for sale to the owners of the machines they supposedly fit by an honest, scrupulous motorcycle manufacturer aware of the legal and reputational implications. Plainly these "spares" are probably only fit for the skip.

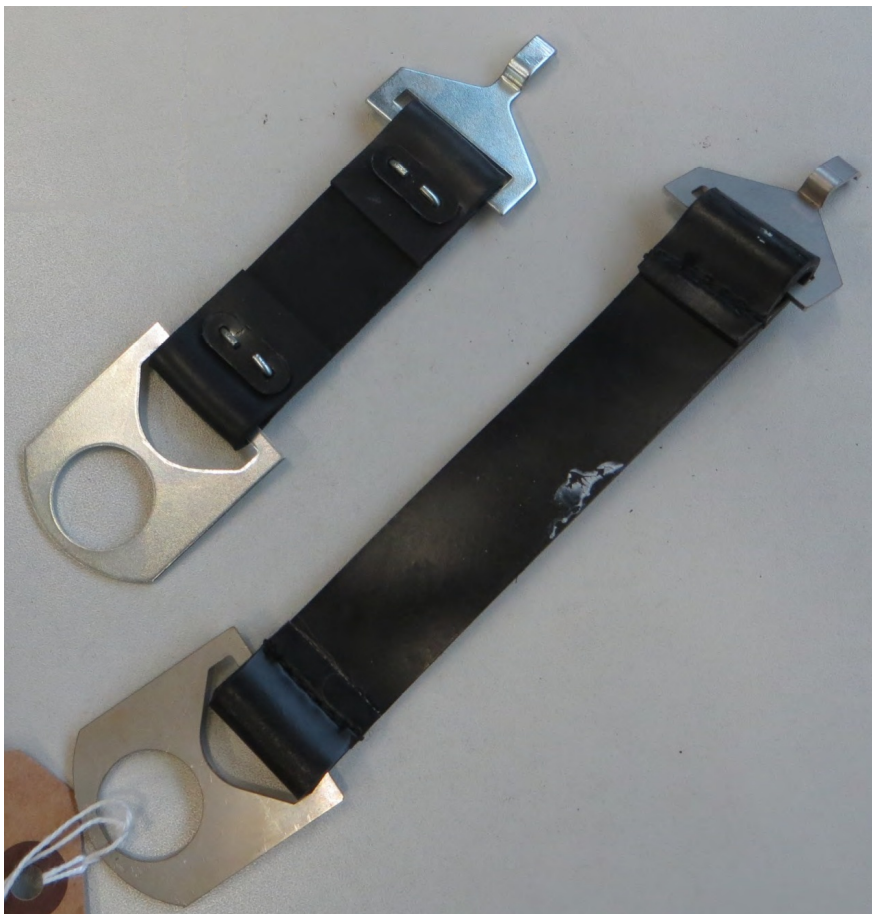
Given that the Donington 961s out there represent several different undocumented evolution stages and component mixes of the Kenny Dreer concept it is practically impossible to verify what part fits what machine. Hence an honest parts supply is practically impossible unless the machine in question is in the factory and can be inspected and worked on by skilled mechanics familiar with the model.

I hear the new Norton Motorcycles staff have now created the drawings, established quality standards and control, and hope to eventually get in the position that enables them to help owners of the Donington-built models.

Parts Quality

Nothing to do with models after 1999, but with offerings for Dommis and classic Commandos. We tend to buy the occasional part from dealers we do not supply to see how good their "alternative offerings" are.

The latest gem our Karl sent me to give my opinion was a simple battery strap. Now, admittedly, a battery strap is less important for the life expectancy of your Commando than the oil pump, but given we recently had great problems to obtain suitable material for the rubber strips on the strap we were keen to see what others come up with.



A battery strap is simple to make? The real deal at the top, the pattern part at the bottom.

As you can see above it does help to have the factory drawings. The pattern strap is about twice as long as it should be. To compensate (?) for that, it does not stretch a single mm... Why bother with rubber if steel strip gave the same effect? And talking of steel, the end pieces are made of stainless steel, so at least they don't rust before the frustrated buyer throws the useless things away after keeping them in a dark corner of his garage for years because they once cost money.

Some general thoughts on Restorations

The experimental "Cosworth Commando" I discussed last month made me wonder what I'd do with it, had I put a successful bid in for it.

As Richard Negus, said it was a sorry-looking thing, obviously thrown together from what was at hand in a minimum of time, and only with a short test on a track in mind. In that state the bike represents a real piece of history, what is often described by the phrase "in as-found condition".



Pride of ownership often leads to rebuilds or restorations that should really be described as forgeries, noble though the motives behind the work may have been. I suspect the buyer of this bike might fall into the trap. I admit my fingers would itch, too!

I have never managed to buy a motorcycle in useable but unrestored, unmodified condition. Even my pre-war racing Inter that I bought of the first owner's son was but a pile of parts after 6 decades of non-use, so had to be rebuilt from the ground up. The 1949 ex-Albert Moule Manx I got indirectly from its second owner was heavily modified to be used in sidecar racing.

The only motorcycle I got in near-original condition was my genuine Proddy Racer, but even that wore the wrong fairing and sported an Italian rear hub, as can be seen on the cover of "Motorrad Klassik" with previous owner Stefan Knittel aboard:



The rear wheel had to go since a) it wasn't original and b) it was offset against the front wheel. By pure coincidence, and because the bike was local from new, the original rear wheel with the vented brake plate turned up and I could buy it back. The fairing was also replaced by the real deal since I suspected the original fairing was probably damaged early in the bike's life and replaced by the Dunstall one.

When you have a 1970s bike, be it a Triumph or a Norton, it helps to make yourself aware these beasts aren't really rare. So unless it is a totally original bike in all details, which they very rarely are, modify as you see fit to suit your taste, riding preferences, and make it as safe and comfortable as you can. Just please shy back from integrating really modern components that are blatantly obvious. Upside-down forks etc just don't suit the looks of a classic machine and if the most modern components are what you want in a bike buy a modern one!

On the other hand if you have a more vintage Norton, say my favourites, OHC racers, try to restore as near to original as possible. These motorcycles are fun to ride as they were in the day, and only to leave them in as-near-as possible condition gives you an idea how good the riders at the time were to get speed and reliability out of them.



Above: Albert Moule with my Garden Gate Manx at the 1949 TT

It helps to have contemporary pictures of the same or similar models and the internet makes the search possible and easy. If you have a bike from the original owner, try to get pictures from him from the time he first had it. If it is a motorcycle raced by a famous rider, or at the TT, there are sources you can ask.

I got pictures of Albert Moule and my 1949 Manx from the Keigh collection, but naturally only AFTER I had restored it. That was frustrating in that these pictures could have spared me a lot of research time. It was also interesting to note the bike, straight out of Bracebridge Street for the event, did NOT have the rubber saddle specified for that year's Manx, but a normal saddle!

Talking of restoring old Nortons, one of my hobbyhorses I am going to probably bore you with in another "Source" is paint schemes on petrol and oil tanks. But enough for now.



Above: Our "barn find" Model 50. Karl's wife Mel saw it and offered to

clean it which we hastily declined!

Christmas Baking

By pure coincidence I had an e-mail from my friend Fast Fraaaanzi, the (now retired) master baker today, whose son is a model maker, and knows his Norton-crazy father.

So he made a cookiecutter for his father that is really very special and no doubt difficult to use with good results. I just had to put the picture of the finished cookie into this December Source!



The finished Cookie. Strictly not available, unfortunately, though all friends tried to talk Fraaaanzi into making some for us!

Routine Maintenance

We are frequently asked by phone, email and at our trade counter, "How often should I check x component for wear?" among other questions about ongoing maintenance and what to be aware of when riding.






So, we have put together a check list detailing what to areas check and how often you should inspect them. It also contains the part numbers for any consumables or tools that you may need when inspecting these areas.



We are the only supplier of Commando & Dominator parts using the original factory drawings. Our products are mostly made in England and to original specification. We also offer Norton Rotary spares, factory service manuals and literature for **NORTON** and **TRIUMPH** motorcycles.

INSIST ON GENUINE FACTORY PARTS PACKAGED WITH OUR A.N. LOGO

NORTON COMMANDO MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Weekly Check tyre pressure & wheel alignment Spray lubricate rear chain																						
Every two weeks Check battery electrolyte level																						
Every 250 miles (400km) Check engine oil tank level																						
Every 500 miles (800km) Check, adjust, spray lubricate rear chain																						
Every 1,000 miles (1,600km) Check primary chaincase oil level Oil all control cables Adjust drum brakes Check disc fluid level Examine disc brake pads for wear																						
Every 3,000 miles (5,000km) Check timing & adjust contact breaker points Clean spark plugs & set gaps Change primary chaincase oil Check clutch adjustment Change engine oil & filter (where fitted) Lubricate and adjust rear chain Check gearbox oil level Grease rear brake pedal pivot Check isolastic mountings for free play Check and adjust valve rocker clearances																						
 <table border="1" style="font-size: small;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Drive chains for Norton Commando</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Gearbox sprocket</th> <th>Chain links</th> <th>Part No.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>19 teeth</td> <td>99</td> <td>01.7376</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 teeth</td> <td>99</td> <td>06.4025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21 teeth</td> <td>99</td> <td>06.4025</td> </tr> <tr> <td>22 teeth</td> <td>100</td> <td>06.5441</td> </tr> <tr> <td>> 22 teeth</td> <td>102</td> <td>06.5441/102</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Drive chains for Norton Commando			Gearbox sprocket	Chain links	Part No.	19 teeth	99	01.7376	20 teeth	99	06.4025	21 teeth	99	06.4025	22 teeth	100	06.5441	> 22 teeth	102	06.5441/102	Every 6,000 miles (10,000km) Change gearbox oil Change oil in forks Check and adjust camshaft chain Clean contact breaker points Lubricate contact breaker cam felt & auto advance unit Grease brake expander lever pivots Fit new air filter element Check & oil swinging arm bushes (Pre-850Mk3) Check spoke tension Check front & rear tyre tread & wear pattern Re-balance wheels, where necessary Every 12,000 miles (20,000km) Re-pack wheel bearings (inc. rear wheel sprocket bearing) with grease Dismantle & clean both carburettors & check for wear Check rear chain for wear & adjust Check steering head bearings Check head steady & head steady rubber mountings Check & tighten front & rear engine bolts Check swinging arm spindle
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Order on-line: www.andover-norton.co.uk tel: 01264 359 565 email: technical@andover-norton.co.uk																						

Routine checking for wear and damage can help avoid disappointment for planned ride outs, or worse, breakdowns!

Mission Christmas Cash for Kids

We are still taking donations for Mission Christmas with Cash for Kids to help under-privileged children during the Christmas holiday.

By raising funds and donating toys, we can help children and young people in the local area enjoy Christmas by having gifts to open on the big day.

As part of this, the Andover Norton Staff will be wearing their best Christmas Jumpers every Wednesday!

If you would like to help, you can either donate, new, unwrapped toys to our collection box at our front desk or by donating to the fundraising page, using the link below.

<https://www.cashforkidsgive.co.uk/campaign/wave-105-mission-christmas-fundraising-2021/fundraisers/andover-norton-international->

[Ltd/](#)

Thank you for your generosity!

Christmas Closure

As we head into the Christmas Break, we will endeavor to despatch every order we can. So, to avoid disappointment, please get your orders in with plenty of time.

We will be closing for the Christmas Break on the 24th December and will re-open on the 4th of January.

You can still place orders on the web shop and we will ship them out as quickly as we can when we return in the New Year.

**That is all for the last “Source”
of 2021. So we wish all a Merry
Christmas and best wishes for
2022!**

The Team from Andover Norton



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