



# Newsletter

April 2015

## Random ramblings

*From Gino Rondelli*

Well as we emerge from what has been a not too cold winter thoughts start to form around the coming year. I've been motorcycling most of the winter in some form (except for a 8 week layoff following a spectacular crash on my trials bike) but I have to say the Nortons haven't seen light of day since October. I find the salt and associated chemicals they put on the roads to try to keep them ice free are getting more and more abrasive and damaging to the bikes (and the cars) so tend to use less "glamorous" bikes in the winter, that's not to say I'll not use the Norton through the winter again but I might be more selective. In a big way that's a shame because it is a very rewarding bike to own and ride but here's a question, when I was but a lad and used the Commando as my main transport I never washed it down after every ride in the winter, thrashed the hell out of it, rarely changed the oil or did ant maintenance and it seemed fine, why is that?

Looking forward to the International in Ireland, the entries are coming in, I'm confident it'll be busy enough to break even without charging a fortune so that's good and I hope to see many of you there. I note the club made a loss of £5K this year and ask myself why, they charge a fortune for events now and I guess that's where the losses will have been made. Personally I think we have lost the plot, this is a motorcycle club, not a bank or a vehicle for a power trip, probably just a curse of corporate 21<sup>st</sup> century facts of life, you have to pay for your fun and show a profit or you are deemed to be failing. Good news (for me anyway) is that we have dropped the Emery idea, common sense or something else prevailed.

Plenty Norton like activities to keep us going this year and hopefully see you at some of them. I just finished rebuilding the top end on the Mk3 which disgraced itself by coming home on the breakdown truck after Germany, never found any one thing but it now has new rings and a top end fresh up and as I write this I just booked two Nortons in for annual test on Saturday so with a bit of luck some Norton miles this weekend.  
Keep it lit

Gino

## Huntigowks

The first TVNOC meeting of the year has come and gone. A good collection of Huntigowks met in a new venue this year, the Comrie Hotel. Our hosts provided coffee and lunch for the owners of an excellent assortment of old and modern machinery, with Nortons, naturally, being well represented.

Thanks to all who managed to attend.



Next Meeting: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2015

## Time to Kill

Sunday past was the Scottish Classic Club gathering at Muckhart Inn. I left just after 09:00 in very heavy rain and, as I headed East, the temperature steadily dropped until just after Dalmailly when rain became blinding snow. It perhaps goes without saying, but I really don't like riding in snow – quite apart from the obvious lack of traction, it won't clear off your goggles or visor so you are constantly having to wipe them. In those temperatures even with a Pinlock visor it's only a matter of time before it mists up too.

Since I fitted the single Mikuni kit to the Commando I have been troubled with a sticking throttle when riding in low temperatures and heavy rain. I stripped and cleaned the carb several times, replaced the cable and tried every possible routing, but it would still stick. Carb icing was suggested but having suffered that a lot on my Ducati I dismissed it as the symptoms were completely different. The Ducati would develop a huge flat spot from just over idle until running on the main jets. (I believe it was the slow running fuel jet that was freezing but the throttle would never stick.) In the end I gave up trying to trace the cause of the Commando sticking and just masked the symptoms by fitting two throttle springs. It makes the pull a bit heavier but still smooth and snaps shut cleanly in all conditions. Well, all conditions until Sunday!

By the time the throttle stuck at 3000rpm I was riding in the car tracks trying to avoid crossing the snow ruts, partly blind because of my visor misting and desperate not to touch the brakes. The only way of controlling speed was to kill the engine, but without a kill switch that meant reaching down under the tank to try and find the ignition switch. Riding one handed, blind, no brakes, stuck throttle, on snow – this is what makes Commandos adventure bikes!

I eventually managed to kill the motor and coast to a halt under a tree for shelter. But in the minute or two that passed with the engine dead the throttle was back to working order. It was snapping shut with a satisfying "clack". Started up and within a mile it was stuck

again. Luckily, by Tyndrum the snow had turned back to rain and by Lochearnhead the temperature had risen enough that normal service was resumed. So I have had to re-evaluate the icing theory – is it possible that ice could form on the slide or on its guide lug and stop the slide from dropping fully home? I also need to seriously think about rewiring the handlebar kill switch. I have found them to be source of problems on various British bikes, but not being able to stop the motor is just too dangerous.

The day improved dramatically with even a glimpse of sunshine to make the tyre kicking a much more pleasant experience.

## New Event

The NOC have been invited to the first Snake Rally being held at the Snake Pass Inn, Bamford, Derbyshire on the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> May. See attached poster.

## May Events

Pre '65 Scottish Two Day Trial  
May 1 2015 to May 2, 2015  
Kinlochleven

Bikes in the Park  
May 10, 2015  
Beveridge Park, Kirkaldy

Triumph OC Camping Weekend  
May 15 to 2015 to May 17, 2015  
Inveraray

NOC International Rally  
May 29, 2015 to June 1, 2015  
Wicklow Rugby Football Club, Ashtown Lane,  
Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow, Ireland

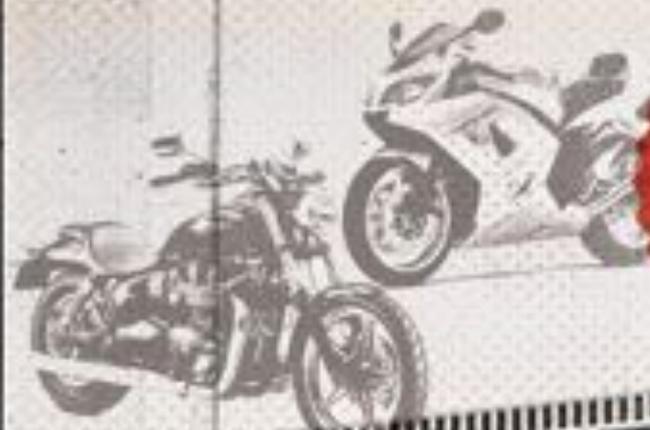
- A SNAKE PASS INN PRODUCTION -

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**9-10TH MAY 2015**