



Newsletter

March 2019

Pipe dreams

For some time now, the Commando exhaust has been blowing a little where the drive side silencer slips over the down pipe. The last time I tried to seal it, I discovered that the silencer had been loose enough to fret a groove on the pipe, so I had slaired it with mastic and tightened the clamp. That lasted for a while, but I thought something more permanent was called for.

To fill the gap some packing was needed and luckily I had some ground steel shim-stock that was an exact fit. (Well, actually I went to the recycling bin and found a tin can to cut up. Same effect though.) I slacked off the clamp and tapped the packing into the joint and retightened the clamp. The result seemed good - no movement between the pipe and silencer and no blowing to be felt with the motor running. So where was that noise still coming from? That became clear when I felt around the inside of the silencer and poked my finger into a hole.

Time for a new silencer then.

I fitted those down pipes in 2006, the LH silencer in 2007 and the RH silencer in 2009 so they have lasted well, but were scabby with rust so decided to change the whole lot. I considered going for a stainless system but had heard that they could be prone to cracking at the head and could be overly loud. Andover didn't have the seamless type silencer in stock. RGM had stock, but were advertising them as being Wassel manufacture, a brand I haven't had a great experience with in the past. However, they were available and reasonably priced. I placed the order online and RGM provided their usual excellent service and had the parts with me in two days. Whenever I want anything for the Norton quickly, they are my first choice.



So, I had a new exhaust system, I had gaskets in stock, surely it would be a couple of hours work in the shed to have it all fitted, leak free and looking great? I think that's where the term "pipe dream" must come from!

I do tighten the bronze exhaust lock-rings up quite tight and I've never had them come loose, but I have never, on any Commando I've owned, had so much trouble getting those rings undone. I went out for a quick spin to get the head hot and then sprayed the rings with freeze spray. Removed the tank to avoid spanner slipping damage, whacked the rings square on to break any corrosion and heaved on my trusty C-spanner. And heaved. And heaved some more. And then slipped an old

fork tube over the handle of the spanner and....thats when the end of my spanner bent.

Time to re-think. Some time ago I bought a very nice lock-ring spanner from a BMW specialist made from stainless with a hole for a 1/2" drive thinking it would be ideal in the traveling tool kit. It also pulls on multiple fins so spreading the load. The drive hole started to round and still no movement from the lock-ring. A three foot pipe over the handle only managed to twist both the handle and arms. I also discovered it has the disadvantage of only fitting onto the ring in one place. Have you ever noticed that the 750 lock-rings have three double width solid fins, presumably to better withstand owner violence? Count the normal fins between the thick ones and you will find that two spaces have five fins and one space has four. My spanner only fits into the four fin space.

At this point it became clear I was going to damage something so I abandoned it for the day and ordered a new C spanner from Andover. The next couple of evenings I sprayed penetrating oil all over the ports and threads and as soon as my shiny new tool arrived I was back at it. Result? Another bent spanner.

I was beginning to think I was going to have to cut the pipes with the angle grinder, take off the head and get the rings machined out. With nothing really left to lose, the inevitable escalation of violence reached its peak with a heavy club hammer and steel punch. Finally, some movement.

Fitting the new pipes was a joy by comparison. They fit well, have a good line and look great. I use thinner bobbins to mount the timing side silencer to give better kickstart clearance. Its still close, but there is no contact. On the first test run there are no leaks and the silencers sound good without being too loud.

Yet another quick job that ends up taking days to complete.



Events

The signs of Spring are everywhere. In fact, I've already spotted the first black visored race replica rider of the season. Possibly tricked into getting the bike out early by the "false spring" last month. Don't think I'll be heading out without my winter suit on for a while yet. For the coming year we have the usual selection of meetings and camping weekends plus we hope to have a few impromptu runs and, of course, attending NOC rallies and joining in with the SCMC. Check out the SVVF year book for more dates, online at <https://www.svfv.org.uk/yearbook> or buy a copy if you can.

7th April from 11:00
TVNOC Huntigowks lunch meeting
Tullybanocher café, Comrie

7th - 9th June
TVNOC Ardnamurchan Camping Weekend
Sunart Camping, Strontian

26th - 28th July
NOC Rampart Rally
Morpeth Rugby Football Club

9th - 11th August
TVNOC Camping Weekend
Applecross Camp site

6th - 8th September
TVNOC Borders Camping weekend
Town Yetholm, near Kelso

21st October from 11:00
TVNOC TattieHowkers lunch meeting
Tullybanocher café, Comrie
