



# Newsletter

March 2020

## The shocking truth

Last summer, just before heading off on holiday, the Ikon shocks on the Commando started leaking. I could feel the ride change, and even a fairly cursory check showed oil leaking from the left damper. Luckily, RGM had replacement units in stock and had them with me in a couple of days. Time enough to get them fitted, even if they did require a little attention with the grinder to the bushes.

I was a bit disappointed with the Ikon, they weren't cheap and they had only been on the bike for 4 years. However one of their selling points is that they are rebuildable, so I thought I would strip them and hopefully have them back in service for the price of a seal kit. I should have known better.

First job was to get the springs off. I don't have coil spring compressors, but I do have a vice and a couple of "speed clamps". By holding the bottom eye in the vice, I could get one end of the clamp under the vice jaw and the other onto a coil near the top. The speed clamps have a couple of disadvantages - you don't get anything like the clamping force you get from a screw clamp and you can't release the force slowly. The force wasn't an issue in this case, but I wanted to control the release, so as I compressed the spring, I tightened a couple of luggage straps around the springs. Then, when I had removed the collet and lifted the spring away, I could gradually release the straps.

That gave me better access to clean and inspect the damper rod, and it wasn't pretty. Both rods had chrome flaking off making it pointless only changing the seals.



Next job was the removal of the seal holder gland nut. This has a slot across the face for some kind of peg spanner, but wouldn't budge until I got brutal with it and locked a big pair of vice grips onto it and swung on them. Still surprises me how many parts on a Norton are assembled by Garth and/or Tarzan.

Once the gland nut is off, the unit was separated, the remaining oil poured out and the damper inspected. The assembly showed some wear, but no deep scores or damage.



A 12mm socket removed the bolt holding the damper to the end of the rod and the parts lifted away, their positions noted and photographed for future reference.

It seemed quite clear from looking at the top part of the unit that the rod and adjuster knob were retained by a threaded ring. There was enough thread showing to make sure it unscrewed in the normal direction (not that there would be any need to have a LH thread where there is no rotation to counter) and indents for a peg spanner. If anything this top ring was even harder to move than the bottom one. The recesses were too small for my peg spanner pins (3mm) so I tried making a spanner to suit using mild steel plate and drill

bits. The bits broke. I tried grinding the pins on my spanner down, but they wouldn't stay in the holes. I tried the brutal but inevitable vice grips which worked on the bottom, but they slid before moving the ring. Then I tried heating the aluminium top eye and only succeeded in melting the plastic adjuster ring.

At this point I was ready to abandon the idea of rebuilding the units at all, so with nothing left to lose, I filed flats across the ring where I had damaged it anyway, clamped that tight in the vice and put the end of a set of handlebars through the eye. It required a fair bit of force, but slowly and grudgingly it started to turn.

Finally fully stripped, I could replace the rod (and the melted parts!).

For whatever reason, stripping the second unit didn't create the same drama or demand the same level of violence. A thorough clean, new seals and rods fitted, filled with 85ml of 5w fork oil and reassembly in the reverse order, had them back together, ready to refit when their replacements go the same way.

The Ikons are good dampers - they feel less harsh than the Hagons they replaced or the current RGM units - but they haven't lasted particularly well and the rebuild hasn't been a cheap option, probably in the region of £130. Of course, its not just about cost, part of it is that I don't like throwing away something that can be rebuilt and there is a satisfaction in reworking something. If I had sent them for a professional rebuild, it would have cost £120 + parts PER SHOCK.

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## EVENTS

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At the AGM in February we discussed Branch events, and we have decided to run with pretty much the same pattern as last year.

### **April 05th 2020**

11:00 to 15:00

TVNOC Huntigowks lunch meeting  
Tullybanocher café, Easter Tullybannoche, Crieff PH6 2JY  
Casual "ride in" meeting to open the season.

### **June 05th - 07th 2020**

TVNOC Ardnamurchan Camping Weekend  
Sunart Camping, Strontian, Acharacle PH36 4HZ  
Traditional low-key camping weekend. Cabins also available on site - book direct and view more details on website [www.sunartcamping.co.uk](http://www.sunartcamping.co.uk).  
We usually book the local hotel for a meal on Friday - if you would like to join us, contact David on [smokeyjoe750@gmail.com](mailto:smokeyjoe750@gmail.com). Places are limited and the kitchen closes quite early.

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### **August 07th – 09th 2020**

TVNOC Applecross Camping Weekend  
Applecross Campsite, Applecross, Strathcarron, Ross-Shire, IV54 8ND

Traditional low-key camping weekend. Huts also available on site - book direct and view more details on website <https://visitapplecross.com>  
Excellent food available at the Applecross Inn, The Walled Garden and The Junction all within walking distance from the campsite.

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### **September 04th – 06th 2020**

Borders Camping Weekend  
Kirkfield Caravan Park, Grafton Rd, Town Yetholm, Kelso TD5 8SA

Three branches camping weekend with Tay Valley, Edinburgh and Northumbria. Book direct with the site (Site: 01573 420346 or Garage 01573420201).  
If interested in joining a group meal at the Plough Hotel, contact David on [smokeyjoe750@gmail.com](mailto:smokeyjoe750@gmail.com).

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### **October 25th 2020**

11:00 to 15:00

TVNOC Tattie Howkers lunch meeting  
Tullybanocher café, Easter Tullybannoche, Crieff PH6 2JY

Coffee, cake and tyre kicking session to round off the season.