



Welcome to the April edition of the Notts & Derby Section's Newsletter.

In this issue we have the story of one person's experiences with one make over a number of decades, an engineer's insight into the British motorcycle industry, more from our regular trials-riding correspondent, a report on a Coffee Morning Run and news about Stuart Garner's sentence.

What's on in May

- 7th **Coffee Run.** 10 am Ripley M/P.
4th **Duke William Lunchtime meet.** Matlock
15th **ROBIN HOOD RUN.** Horse & Groom, Linby.
10.30
19th **Barrie's Chip Shop Run.** 7.30pm Ripley M/P.
21st **Sat pm run** with Burton. 2pm A52 Mackworth.
24th **Inter-section Gathering.** John Thompson Inn.
7pm
26th **Evening Run.** 7.30pm Whatstandwell
29th **Sunday Run.** 10am Lay-by A6071

'Lunchtime Classic Bike Meet'

12noon Wednesday 4th May 2022



The Duke William pub, Church Street, Matlock DE4 3BZ

Coffee Run

The Saturday Morning Coffee Run led by Graham on 26th March went very well. The weather was beautiful. There were sixteen machines and there were three first timers amongst them. Welcome to them all. The group stopped at Homesford Cottage for their coffee in the sun. I just wished that I could

have been with them instead of having to self-isolate!



Former Norton owner Garner sentenced.

Stuart Garner, former owner of Norton, has been given a suspended sentence. He was handed three 12-month sentences, reduced to eight months, to be served concurrently. These were then suspended for two years. He was also ordered to pay £20,716.69 in costs – despite being declared bankrupt on May 26, 2021 – and disqualified from being a director for three years.

Hundreds of people lost money after investing in three pension schemes where Garner was trustee. He breached pensions regulations by investing all of their money into his business, when he should not have used more than 5%.

In June 2020, the Pension Ombudsman ordered Garner to pay back millions of pounds owed to pension holders who invested in his three schemes, saying he had "acted dishonestly and in breach of his duty".

However, he never paid back the money and was declared bankrupt in May 2021.

This was after Leicester City Council pursued Norton Motorcycles for defaulting on a £750,000 economic development loan, which had been personally guaranteed by Garner.

The 53-year-old had pleaded guilty to three charges of breaching pension scheme regulations when he previously appeared at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates' Court.

The case was then sent to Derby Crown Court for sentencing.

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Trials and Tribulations.

I got a nice mention in this month's VMCC mag in a report on the Taverners trial at Stainby last month. Going well on the old DOT when broken piston rings brought things to a stop. The first picture is from the Journal:



I've enjoyed riding my 200 Fantic a couple of times recently, firstly at Clifton in March without dropping a mark on the very easy route.. I'll have to do 50/50 next time!

..and then a Peak Classics trial at Matlock Moor where I did their second-tier-up route - again a bit too easy and only dropped marks when getting the route wrong.

I'll probably complain about it being too hard next time!

Photo at Matlock Moor, courtesy of the Classic Trial Magazine FB page.



On the Fantic.

I also rode last weekend in the first round of The Northern British Bike Trial series around the lanes and valleys of the Lincolnshire Wolds. My long-time trials riding friend and VMCC member, Bob Sherras, joined me for the run over to near Louth and rode my old 1967 250 Villiers engined Cheetah. Bob's usual mount, a 250 Bultaco isn't eligible for these events so I was happy for him to give the Cheetah a run out.

We both rode the Clubman route and Bob duly won the class, going clean all day. My day was going well until inexplicably throwing myself down the road between sections badly grazing and bruising legs and elbows. I managed to fall under the DOT though to save scratching it!

I was counting the sections off after that to just finish, really hobbling around sections to check lines but amazingly losing just three more marks... but that was enough to drop me to 8th place Several visits this week to Ripley A&E later to have my wounds dressed haven't dampened my enthusiasm too much - it's just that Ana says I'm not allowed out on my own again!

The attached photos of Bob and me are taken in an early stream section in the Poachers trial before my fall.



Bob Sherras, Cheetah.



Andrew Cooke, DOT.

Andrew Cooke.



My Norton Story.

(This was originally planned for March's issue but when I received Ian Lawrence's excellent Norton story, I held this one back.)

Those of you who know me will be used to me riding my Triumph but this is about another make.

It is a long story. But only in as much as it covers a number of decades. It all started when I was a lad of fifteen. A pal, Ray, had got me interested in motorcycles and I was preparing a BSA C11 for the day I hit sixteen. I had ridden a few times (another story) and one evening Ray said that Eddie, a friend of his older brother, had parked his Norton Dominator 99 outside their house while he went out and he was sure that Eddie wouldn't mind us trying it out.

Well, young and daft, I didn't need telling twice and I got my turn up and down the street after Ray had his. This was when I discovered what an ear-to-ear grin was. After the C11, this was a revelation. I was hooked!

The relevance of all this is that about four years later, that same Dommie was languishing in Eddie's parents' coal shed as he had moved on to cars. My closest friend, Alan was looking for something quicker than his Matchless G80 and asked about the Norton.

A deal was struck and a few days later, Alan and I were to be seen pushing a dilapidated motorcycle up and down hills the two miles from Eddie's house to Alan's. Over the next few weeks, the bike was completely rebuilt but not in the modern fashion of total restoration. This was the 1960s and we had very little money but lots of enthusiasm. Rusty mudguards were replaced with aluminium, rear-set footrests complimented the straight handlebars very comfortably and a short seat with an angular hump often managed to accommodate us both (I said we were close.) The entire machine was brush painted in mid-blue Crown Solo (I think it was called Solo, I know it was Crown.) This was not so bad as it sounds, it gave a really good finish. Not exactly a café racer but less "staid" than standard (to our eyes.)

Alan and I shared a lock-up garage and we rode each other's bikes all the time. Having more riding experience than when I first rode it, I quickly appreciated what a lovely ride the Norton was. Whenever my bike was out of commission, which was frequently, we would ride two-up on it; usually one of us would be the passenger on the way to wherever we were headed and then we would swap for the return journey. Probably because the hump was too uncomfortable for both journeys.

I loved the Dominator, and when I finally began to get some money together, I looked all over for a brand-new featherbed Norton but they were becoming obsolete. The only one in production was the 650 Mercury but they were scarce.

A salesman convinced me that I could afford a Commando so in September 1970 I became the proud owner of a new Roadster in metallic blue. This was a lovely machine to ride. Fast, with excellent handling, smooth, comfortable and to top it all, the exhausts twittered like a Goldie! When the twittering stopped, that was the cue to adjust the tappets and back it came.

We rode together all the time on our Nortons. We had started to go to Motorcycle Rallies all over the country so most weekends in the summer (and plenty in the winter) we would be loaded up with camping gear and beer money taking ourselves to that week's field of choice. One Rally near Barnard Castle was usually held in snowy conditions; I'm happy to say I don't do that sort of riding anymore!



The commando when new.

Although a lovely ride, the Commando was not without its problems. The condensers were attached to the coils under the front of the fuel tank and the onset of rain would have it running on one cylinder or sometimes none. Clutch cables snapped regularly until heavy duty ones became available. On one occasion, both coils totally failed on the same day, which left me puzzled as usually one goes down and you can confirm it by swapping the wires around. I was thinking it must be something else as they wouldn't both fail together, would they? The small fuel tank was impractical but I liked it.

Worst of all, the gearbox seized solid, locking the rear wheel, just as I pulled back in after overtaking a lorry on the A38. I could do nothing but hold on as the lorry re-passed me with his horn blaring. It could have been very nasty. The layshaft bearing had disintegrated and first thing I knew was that the kickstart hit me in the back of the leg! This was due to Norton not putting a shock absorber in the transmission when they changed the clutch design. Later, they put one in the rear wheel.

Nevertheless, I loved that bike and soon there were five of us riding Nortons together. Four Commandos and the Dommie. Eventually, Alan sold the blue Dominator to another friend, Ian, who sadly died aged 22 in a collision while riding it.



Ian, with the Dominator.

I continued to ride the Commando and added a cissy bar with a little luggage rack after I nearly lost a passenger. I slowed down for a red traffic light and he relaxed and took his feet off the rests to straighten his legs. The lights changed as I approached so I changed down and accelerated. The next thing I knew was that I was being lifted off the seat! His feet were under my armpits raising me up and his torso was horizontal off the back of the seat. I closed the throttle and his helmet hit mine with a mighty bang. Good job he had long legs. The Cissy Bar prevented a repeat of that.



1971, with Cissy Bar.

A proper rack with craven panniers replaced the Cissy bar when I went to the Isle of Man in 1975 with the girl who became my first wife. She had little understanding of the luggage capacity of a two-wheeler and insisted on taking a suitcase along with all the camping gear. The suitcase made the return trip by BRS! As children came along and money was tighter, I rode my Commando less and less and eventually couldn't afford to tax and insure it (we've all been there.) I sold it in the MCN ads to a dealer from London for what I thought was a fair price. He took mine and a Triton he had also bought in Nottingham back in a pickup truck and the following week they were each advertised for exactly twice the price he had paid.



The Dominator-Commando Hybrid.

After collecting it from Exeter (!) I started to look it over. As I worked on it, paint was flaking off the frame and I decided it would all have to come apart. Good job I did as there were no end of bodes and problems but on stripping the crank, I found that the build-up of sludge was minimal, about one millimetre. The 25,000 miles on the speedo were probably correct. Since then, when I've had time, I have been putting it back to as close to standard as possible. It was a semi café racer, so I'm doing the reverse of what Alan and I did in the 1960s. It would have been much easier, and cheaper, to buy one already finished.



The Commando in the early 1980s, still with the panniers.

I still had a Norton, though! Remember Alan with the Blue Dominator? He had acquired another one as a basket case. This one was a little special as it came with a Commando top end and chain case. I think we calculated the displacement at 686cc and we figured it would be high on revs but low on longevity. It looked good, though. Alan was leaving to work abroad for a few years so I bought it from him. I never finished it though, as the same old problems, (money, time) got in the way. My wife could spend money faster than I could earn it and eventually I advertised it. When the buyer arrived, he noticed a collection of parts from two basket-case Royal Enfields and took those too! Money issues solved but my motorcycling career was over in 1986.



The latest project as purchased.

Fast forward to 2016. I had been riding again for a few years and I was on the lookout for another Norton. I was still in love with them and I could afford one now. I found a 1960 Dominator 99 advertised as an "easy project" (aren't they all?)

Meanwhile, I have a friend, Rob, in South Wales who also owns a 1960 Dominator 99. When I'm visiting him, we often go for a ride and I get a go on his. The first time I rode it, everything came flooding back to me within the first half mile: It felt so right and just as I remembered Alan's from the 1960s. I knew then that I had made the right decision in going for a Dominator. The rebuild continues but slowly due to a house move, wedding and lots of building jobs, although I have had a

spurt recently. I hope to be riding it on our runs sometime in the near future. This one I WILL finish!

Bruce.

An interesting, if controversial, analysis of some aspects of the British motorcycle Industry. Shared by Al Melling, who has extensive experience in automotive engineering.



I was prompted to write this due to comments about Turner and his designs, etc.

I must say that design depends on what you see as a design. If you take Hopwood, yes he designed engines, but do you include the BSA and Ariel as designs when, if one looks, it's only the cam and pushrods that he moved from the back of the BSA engine and to the front of the Ariel. Turner designed the Daimler v8 car engine when he bought a Chrysler V8 and got a draughtsman to draw it to scale 0.4 to 1. The Triumph inline twin he designed in the 1930s we accept was his idea but according to many at the time he wasn't a very good draughtsman, so if he had guys doing his layouts who designed it or maybe we should say whose IDEA was it.

I was down in Chesingham at Brabham, trying to get them interested in my new gearbox design, oil pressure under the sliding pinions, rotating barrel for selector forks and the ability to have push button gearchange. THIS WAS IN DECEMBER 1968. So, the phone rings and it's Doug Hele from Triumph: Al could you see me on your way home. I was leaving that day so I could call in at Meriden.

Driving my Daimler V8 250, I liked the car but the engine to me was way under powered, at high rpm the thing didn't sound nice. I thought well, his bikes all have noisy valve gear and here is his creme de la creme. Ok, here I am, Doug standing on the steps waiting for me. I thought bloody hell that's special. He got in my car and off we went to a pub, By this time i had got a dictaphone, so I could take notes on my travels and get them filed when I was also away.

Sitting opposite each other he came out with photographs and some pictures and draughtman's drawing prints.

I looked at drawings they were of a 350 vertical twin, ohc. And the gearbox, he said, what do you think? (I had just designed a multi cylinder engine for a major Japanese manufacturer and in my opinion it was going to be a very unique engine.)

He heard about my Japanese goings on.

What do I think, I said, well it's not good, its old English technology. What do you mean? I said I am sorry but can I explain? He said that's why I want to talk to you.

Ok, the cases should be split horizontally, on multi cylinders it's a must to have a bearing between each cylinder for inertia balance. On this you will have cracks occurring around the pins, and why only 2 bearings? He said it saved money on line boring. I was disgusted. He said he had been working on trying to get satisfactory balance over 2 years and at one time Turner had a go. I said well, ok if you get it balanced, think of the power it's going to absorb trying to accelerate that big flywheel weight every time. He replied well its good, its 34hp at 9000. I was impressed, I said Doug you are a magical worker but you see we now would never do that. It's all about lightweight cranks etc, and with those cases you cannot have a nice gearbox cos the bearings have to split. I have a 6-speed box layout here. I showed him, he said is it yours? I said all the big 4 are going that way and the pinions are sat on pressure oil.

Doug Hele said, "I wish i was with that. I said I can have a word and many days later he was approached but he turned it down. Japan was not for him.

The picture of the bike shown here is what he give me, it was on my boardroom wall until i retired. So, I explained all the stuff the Japanese were doing: they check everything before they put pencil to board, then they do it. There are limitations with all the companies, the design must use the lightest components (not material, the material is good and getting better, the Americans are helping them with

that) also never design an engine that's multi cylinders with a vertical split (it doesn't work), for the crank and gearbox unless it's a single, which they only make for certain projects.

I asked him about the area he had in the cam boxes, they are big enough for 4 valve at say 18/19 diameter then it would go over 9000rpm and you could have the reduction in height they wanted. He said there is no way 4 valves can be used, Joe Craig sorted that. I said bloody hell who does he think he is. Doug said Joe had kept 4 -valve away just so Weslake wouldn't have the credit, but you know he has 12 bikes at his disposal for racing and all have broken cranks today. I don't think he understands crank design, he just did an outside flywheel. I said yes I saw it, the Japanese thought it was steam!

We agreed that the main problems were to save money and a lack of the new technology at the time.

Al Melling.

Special delivery.



A female dispatch rider c1942

DOUBLE MANX DRAGSTER 1967



The photo shows a special dragster built in the late 1960s by Eamon Hurley. For the previous two seasons, he had been invincible on British strips in the 350cc class on a 350 Manx Dragster. This led him to build the special using two 500 Manx engines

Most of the troubles experienced by British special builders of multi-engined devices had been in coupling the engines together, but Hurley cured this as far as possible by keeping the two engines as separate units.

The two engines were mounted into the frame at an angle and each had its own primary chain driving to its own clutch.

The two clutches were built back to back as a common unit.

Therefore, when the clutch was lifted, each engine was free of its partner. But, strangely, when the clutch was dropped again, the engines always seemed to return to the same phasing.

The engines ran as though on a 180 degree common crankshaft with evenly disposed firing strokes. And they always returned to this phasing whenever the clutch was re-engaged. Hurley believed that this phenomenon was due to the fact that, should the engines be slightly out of the 180-degree phasing when the clutch is dropped, one clutch slips sufficiently to allow the units to re-align.

The net result of this was a power unit which sounded very like a big vee-twin.

The engines were modified by fitting 350cc cylinder heads to the 500cc engines. This increased the compression ratio to a little over 13.5:1. The only other modification needed was the machining of the Manx pistons to fit into the shallower combustion chambers. Records of his success with this machine seem to be unavailable.

Hurley later went on to specialise in Rotary engines and built a top-fuelled drag-bike with an NSU Ro80 engine. In the early '80s, the Concorde was campaigned very successfully, clocking regular 8s runs.

Free Advertisements.

FOR SALE:



Honda 250 twin port Silk Road 1986 imported 1990 Motd new battery and chain Motd 8/22. Rare extra low bottom gear Kick starter as well as iffy electric starter. £2250. Nottm. 0115 9179248.

Dot Armstrong shock absorbers. Norton.

Many of you will know that DOT made shock absorbers after motorcycle production finished. These were taken from a featherbed Dominator (a not-uncommon replacement, apparently) but might fit others. 12 inches between centres, stamped MT-023.

Condition used but seem good. Two or three of the bottom rubber bushes have been trimmed back a little. Photo shows the worst one. You can check before buying. Collection preferred as postage would be expensive. £40. Bruce 07442 168932.



Mamouth heavy duty ground anchor (brand new, no fixings). £20. (They sell at £42.95) Phill, 07790 179095.



WANTED:

Wanted a pre-war Triumph Speed Twin, and a Sprung Hub for a 3T. I would also be interested in a BSA C11. Please phone Peter Gibson 0115 9314362 or 07970 285 668.

CONTACT US:

Please let me have any stories from the past, amusing or otherwise, concerning motorcycles, or any technical information, rebuild stories, photos or news of events by replying to this email. Let us know what you've been up to by emailing me at: nottsandderbyvintageclub@outlook.com

Use the same address and format if you have any items or motorcycles for sale. Don't forget to include a phone number and a price.