

Bush Chatter

May/June 2016

And just when you thought...



...you'd seen everything!!

Not too many details on this one..alright, none except the photos. There are three photos, so that's 3000 words right? This has to be the epitome of Germanic pride. So, what can we see? What looks like an air-cooled VW engine, a frame that would hold up a bridge, some thumping rubber, a decent set of horns and lights, a comfy looking seat and that VW Kombi sidecar all wrapped in what looks like a distinctly Afrika Korps paint job. Oh, and a registration plate!



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Contributions to our club newsletter are always welcome. This month I thank three Jeffs – Becker, McCarthy, and McKeon as well as Danny Curran for their input.

- **It's winter time:** The riding weather has deteriorated somewhat, so now is the time to get stuck into all those 'little jobs' you have been meaning to do on your bike...



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Running roadside repair



There's probably nothing more annoying than when you're on a ride with your mates on a beautiful day and one of your tyres decides to give up the ghost. But determined motorcyclists, like the gentleman in our photo, will not let that deter them, or stop their enjoyment. Five minutes and some masking tape and you're back on the road again. Not recommended mind you, but when needs must...and there are probably some unkind people out there who think the tape might have actually improved the handling of that period ribbed tyre!

Dates to remember

A reminder regarding the requests for displays of bike in the coming weeks. If you know any new members (some may not be on the membership list at this point) or members not on email please pass this onto them. For further information please contact the designated contact.

• Friday, July 1. 4pm to 8pm
Hattah Enduro Scrutineering.
Red Cliffs Football Oval.
Contact Cyndie Kempton
0438 237 247

• Sunday, July 10. 10.30am to 2pm
Wentworth Flood/Fergy Rally
Wharf lawns at Wentworth.
Leave Hudaks at 9.30am.
Contact Jack McCarthy 0408 528 091

And, our next montly meeting date is Sunday, June 26.

Doug is OK!

Members will probably be aware that 'young' Doug Laird was involved an accident during the May monthly club ride. Knocked off his outfit, he fortunately suffered only minor cuts and abrasions, but ended up with four stitches in his noggin. Later the same day, a text from President Jack informed Bush Chatter that he was 'OK' and resting, reasonably comfortably, at home surrounded by concerned family and friends. There was a rumour that he wasn't allowed out into his shed to see what damage had been done to his Ariel combo, not immediately anyhow. According to those members who witnessed the accident at the 16th Street and Walnut Avenue roundabout, Doug had right of way, and the driver of the car was at fault. Unfortunately, whether the rider, in this case Doug, is in the right or not, they are the one most likely to get hurt as happened in this case. We wish Doug a speedy recovery...

The mighty Norton is reborn

First there was Triumph, then Indian and now Norton. Old motorcycle brands are coming back from the dead at a great rate.

Norton is one of the oldest brands of all. The British company was set up in 1898, though technically didn't build its first motorcycle until 1902.

As with Triumph and Indian, there have been some lean times in a long, long history, plus a few stops, starts and failed revivals.

Triumph is now a successful, almost mainstream brand, while the latest Indian revival is backed by the US's massive Polaris Industries.

Norton though is something closer to a cottage industry, albeit one with a very nice cottage. The company hand builds about 1000 motorcycles a year out of the castle-like Donington Hall, UK, next to the famous racing circuit known as Donington Park.

Surprisingly, the local importer, Norton Motorcycles Australia, reckons a quarter of that annual production will come here.

"It's a big market, and there is a lot of affection for the British brands," says Warren Lee, whose company has spent over a year completing local homologation requirements and finally has the bikes on sale nationally.

Norton history is convoluted, with the original mainstream company largely wiped out when the Japanese motorcycle industry found its stride in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lower volume revival

A lower volume revival in the late 1980s saw Nortons fitted, bizarrely, with Wankel rotary engines. Sales were tiny.

The new generation Norton Commander 961 was developed in the US in the early 21st century by Kenny Dreer, an enthusiast and restorer of old bikes who had bought the rights to the company name.

His ambitious production plans out of Portland, Oregon, were never realised and ownership of the brand returned to England circa 2008 via British businessman and motorcycling enthusiast Stuart Garner.

The 961 was further developed and put into production, though fortunately its attractive lines remained largely unchanged.

The Norton 961 is conventional,

with an aircooled, pushrod parallel twin displacing 961cc, a five-speed box, chain drive and low, spindly styling that recalls Nortons of days gone by.

It is beautifully presented with hand-painted livery on the heavily sculptured tank and a look that is totally in keeping with the brand's heritage.

Ours was finished in Manx Silver, with a couple of carbon-fibre panels (the one non-retro touch) in the form of the front guard and instrument panel cowling.

Branding just right

A stylised 'N' is embossed on the gearbox, the word 'Norton' on the other side of the engine, but the branding hasn't been over done (I counted 'Indian' stamped, painted or stickered more than 20 times on the reborn US bike).

The modern Norton is not cheap. The three-tiered model range starts at \$31,490 for the Sport, the Café Racer (as ridden for this story) is \$35,490 and the range-topping 'street naked' SF is \$2000 dearer again.

All bikes are similar mechanically, with some minor suspension changes and cosmetic differences.

Nor is the latest Norton leading edge.

The styling is self-consciously retro but some other makers have allowed such a presentation to hide 21st century smarts.

Not here. The 961 engine has fuel injection but, with just under 60kW, it generates nowhere near the power of most modern sports bikes.

There are few electronics, and no rider aids (traction control and anti-lock brakes are not available, for example). The exotic materials and high-styled finishes of, say, the latest Italian bikes, are nowhere to be found.

The welded tube steel frame looks like solely the work of engineers

rather than – looking at other upmarket sports bikes – the combined effort of a team of stylists, engineers and advanced metallurgists.

Vintage look without compromise

What Norton is selling you is the vintage look and feel of a classic machine without – one hopes – the reliability issues or safety compromises.

The new bike feels safe and secure on modern sports tyres, and has Brembo brakes (with twin discs up front) and a fairly sophisticated Ohlins suspension system.



It is tested on the Donington race track so is almost certainly good for much higher speeds and fiercer cornering loads than most will achieve on public roads.

So, who is buying the reborn Norton?

"People who are attracted to the brand because of what it represents," says Lee. "We are seeing buyers who remember the brand from their childhood and we are also seeing some younger guys because Norton was the bike that started the original café racer scene back in the 1960s in the UK."

'Café racer' is the name applied to stripped-down production bikes with a 1960s Grand Prix-style riding position and, usually, a short seat and long tank with indentations for the knees. The Deus Ex Machina people have produced a large secondary industry converting secondhand bikes to the style.

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The mighty Norton is reborn

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Most attractive variant

Certainly Norton Café Racer is to these eyes to most attractive variant in the company's range, though stylishness comes at a price. The lay-down handlebars and short seat do not provide the most comfortable riding position.

The indentations in the tank are quite a long way back, meaning even a tall rider (like this one) is at a full stretch when riding.

Still, despite the small and

modestly upholstered seat, the ride comfort is pretty good.

The vintage feel involves not just a slightly soft ride, but a lopping, lazy revving engine (and a heavy clutch). The redline is a low-ish 8000 rpm.

When asked to get on with it though, the torque engine provides quite a sting in the tail.

The controls are conventional, the instruments very basic.

The view above the instruments is of the unfinished webbing of the carbon-fibre cowling. It is hard to get

a good rear view through those small mirrors while in the crouched riding position.

The more upright bars on the other two models would provide more comfort for something other than racing from café to café.

There were thumbs-up aplenty, suggesting Lee is correct: after an absence of more than 35 years, there are a lot of people out there who like the idea of a Norton motorcycle.

It will be interesting to see how many will stump up with \$30,000-plus.

Euston lunch for the Meander



A couple of shots from the recent Meander. This is a selection of the bikes, shot from the Euston Club balcony overlooking the mighty Murray River. A great day's ride, and a great event, by all accounts and one that was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Well done to those who organised the event, and all those who helped to ensure its success by volunteering their time to assist. Photos Danny Curran.





Worth a trip to Brim

Several club members have now made the trip to Brim to check out the large murals painted on the town's towering grain silos.

It is, those that have seen it say; "Well worth a butcher's hook."

Maybe a club ride for the future?

It is a two-and-a-half hour trip, or 234 kilometres, down the Calder and Sunraysia Highways.

For those who cannot make it just yet, see ABOVE.

1925 Douglas 2¾ HP



Douglas Rally

Yet another date for your diary. The SHMCC agreed to help stage the national Douglas rally on the weekend (beginning Friday) of October 8,9,10 and 11th. Once again, help is being sought from club members to help stage the event. There is no national Douglas club, so owners will be using the SHMCC umbrella to stage the event and make it official. Once again, president Jack is on top of the details as they stand. There will, of course, be more to come on this in the future at our monthly meetings and on the website.

Website update

Our club has its own website. It is now well and truly up and running, albeit in its infancy.

Club member and IT specialist Richard Waters will work with our editor Grant Maynard, and the club executive, to add a host of new features and material to the site in coming months, and the plan is to keep updating it throughout the month, especially if the timing is not right for the content to be included in the newsletter.

You'll find it at www.shmc.org.au/. The plan is to make club information more accessible to our members.

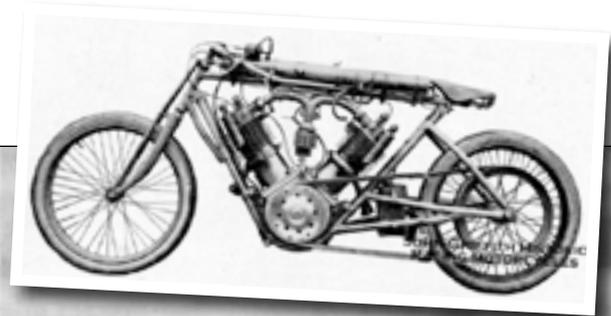
Soon to be included features include a newsletter archive and PDFs of standard club forms, including bike registration requests and change of personal detail forms.

These can be filled in on-line, and then printed out to be handed in at a monthly meeting, or emailed to the appropriate office bearer.

Motorcycling moments in time...



Indian Motorcycles were popular in both the UK and France, where this very clear and entertaining image was taken. It shows Miss Yvonne De Graine posing with an Indian twin and a sidecar. She was on the French swimming team at the 1920 Olympics held in Antwerp, Belgium, where she placed fourth in the Women's 100 metre freestyle contest. Just behind her can be seen an Indian dealer's storefront.



"The North London Garage, of Corsica Street, Highbury, London, North, is now specialising in the tuning up of motorcycles for hill climbs and club competitions."

That quote came from the *The Motor-Car Journal*, Saturday, June 13th, 1908 issue, and from the looks of the machines seen here, they must have known what they were doing.

However, we know little of the two machines shown here other than they seem to have featured the same monster J.A.P. engine. The photos are courtesy of Czech expert motorcycle restorer Pavel Malanik.

He has information which states that the first machine constructed (inset photo) was un-rideable, probably because of the lightweight single loop frame.

The second version of the machine (main photo), featured a much stronger rigid frame style frame (note the single bicycle type brake on the front wheel). With it W.E. Cook set a speed record of 90mph or 144km/h on England's Brooklands track.

In studying the details of the engine it will be noted that it appears to have two exhaust ports per cylinder. It also appears to have

auxiliary exhaust ports at the bottom of the piston stroke. The cuffs halfway down each cylinder, and the tubes pointing downward from them, seem to indicate it is so equipped.

The John Alfred Prestwich 80 degree engine, is stated to have a square bore and stroke and a massive 2714cc volume of displacement, which works out to 165.62ci, a huge engine for a motorcycle. Early on in the speed game of all types, one of the ways to success was with a large engine, as the science of making power was still being developed.

Wanted To Sell

- NORTON Model 7 Dominator crankshaft and conrods. Fully reconditioned. Complete Norton Dominator gearbox minus clutch. Serial # GB8 2418 Will listen to realistic offers. Call Adam on 5023 0977.
- LEATHER JACKET. Brando style. Large. \$80. Garry 0429 837 633.
- HONDA CB100 1970. Complete and running. Price to be negotiated. Bill Cox on 5023 0653.



BSA Bantam 1954 125cc. Runs well. Mikuni carburetor, compression plates in crankcase and a 12volt CDI ignition all makes for a great little fun bike to ride, or restore back to how they were in their day. All this fun for only \$3000 ono. Was on club permit but has since ran out. Call Kevin Brown on 0409 107 572.

- HARLEY 883 SPORTSTER, 2007 model, 18,000km, very good condition, new rear tyre and battery. Includes RWC, 12 months rego and transfer fee. \$8,500. Ride away no more to pay! Great entry level Harley. Lady owner. For further info and/or inspection contact Jack 0408 528 091.



- 1984 SUZUKI GSX250S. Reg 4386H \$2000 ono. Roger Moser 0428 413 323

- 1987 Harley Sportster XLH 883 DLX. \$8000 Ring Danny. 0447 568 829

Wanted To Buy

- SUNBEAM S7 1950 gearbox to tailshaft coupling or bushes. Also gear indicator bezel that goes between gearbox and gear lever. Please contact Paul Dunn 0408 999 120.
- CB450 HONDA Twin Leading shoe front drum and backing plate and linkage. Complete. 0407 364 692 or email dougo294@hotmail.com.

Coming Events

Regular Club Runs

- Monthly meeting rides leave from Hudaks on 15th Street opposite Centro at 10am. And remember, try not to park near the pet shop. The run finishes at the Mildura Scout Hall in 12th Street, Mildura.
- The mid-month ride leaves from Hudaks on 15th Street opposite Centro at 10am on the second Sunday of the month. Turn up with a full tank, and try not to park near the pet shop!

This is a good deal...

Graham Burton-Clay at Sunraysia Bearings, 34 Orange Avenue, Mildura, telephone 5023 4337, is offering all SHMC members trade prices on a wide range of items including those featured below... All you have to do is flash your membership card to get one of the best deals going around. Sunraysia Bearings has 50 years experience in the industry, is owned and operated by people that live and work in our community. Thanks Graham! Let's support the bloke who supports us. Here are just a few of the great products available...

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