

## YOUR COMMITTEE

### Chairman

Mick Hunter  
Tel: 01483 725704

### Secretary

Ian Verrinder  
Tel: 01252 318524  
ian.Verrinder@virgin.net

### Treasurer

Chris Fry  
01932 227548

### Newsletter

Rob Latham  
01628 825202  
robert.latham@btinternet.com

## NEXT BRANCH MEETING

15<sup>th</sup> July 2003



[www.noc-tv.co.uk](http://www.noc-tv.co.uk)

## Solent Track Day

The Solent track day at Longcross started out in superb form with the sun beating down and plenty of bikes in the paddock. The format was similar to past events and it was all going very well until shortly before the lunch break. Unfortunately one of the riders lost control of his machine on the exit of the banked corner prior to the back straight. The ensuing accident left the young man concerned in a bad way. The St. John's Ambulance were on the scene immediately and quickly called in a paramedic. An ambulance also arrived a little later and took the rider to hospital. However, we learned a little later that the person concerned had died on the way to hospital. Following this news the organisers terminated the event.

Since then the Norton Owners Club has held its own internal inquiry into the accident and also assisted the police in their enquiries. Representatives of the club have also attended the funeral of the young man concerned and offered condolences on our behalf to his family - I for one would like to thank Phil Hill and Jeremy Nichols for their efforts. Although I am not party to any of the inquiries related to this sad event I have been impressed with the dignity and consideration shown by the club and its officials in dealing with events at Longcross. We are lucky to have people within the NOC, who do not shy away from their responsibilities and are able to deal with such difficult situations. As a result of this accident we have decided to cancel our own track day at Longcross, which was scheduled for September.

*Ian Verrinder.*

## Branch Run to the Fox and Goose at Greywell

On the June 12th eight Thames Valley men set off for the Fox and Goose, and a rendezvous with the Solent branch. After a pleasant run led by Barry Stickland we arrived at Greywell just as the Solent men did. All the riders neatly joined together for the final descent into the pub car park. With a few others who were already there we numbered about twenty in all. We had a good evening jawing with the yokels from Hampshire, which was marred only by the drink driving laws. Anybody for a camping night at the Fox and Goose? Now there's a better idea!

*Mark Benians*

## New Members and Renewals

We've had quite a few in over recent weeks. I haven't space to mention them all, however, I must welcome Phil and Sheena Palmer again who have just renewed. Phil was our first newsletter editor and regular Harley riding Norton owner before Sheena and he left to open a post office! Apparently, he still hasn't got the Commando on the road but at least he's now got e-mail so he can read this bollocks! Another one that amused me was John Catling who has just renewed using a 2001 renewal form! I won't ask what all the stains are on the form but it's nice to hear from you again John - welcome.

*Ian Verrinder.*

## Monthery Or Bust - PART 1

Back in February I thought I would just whip the cylinder head off my Combat engined Commando to check the valve seats and guides and hopefully solve the smoking exhaust that didn't seem to get better by itself. This would leave me plenty of time to sort everything before heading off to Monthery in the middle of May for which Eurostar and accommodation had been booked. Once the rocker shafts and valves were out everything seemed to be more

or less in order but as the head was already in bits I decided to have the exhaust valve seats replaced to allow worry free unleaded usage.

The head was away for a week or so and the many people kindly offering advice suggested I lift the barrel to see if the source of the smoking exhaust could be established. Why not I thought, it can't be that complicated, so off it came and low and behold there were the pistons, one of which had a cracked skirt and there was the camshaft, which seemed to be missing most of one cam lobe. Perhaps I had stumbled on the source of the problem. The solution of course was now clear, I would have to take the engine out and this was now going to jeopardise the Montlhery plans and perhaps I would have to take the Blackbird instead.

Having never really worked on a Commando before this was all getting a little daunting but the advisors were all there egging me on and all offering different advice! The engine came out fairly easily and since it had to be stripped I decided to have the crankcase breather modified from the lower rear position to the later top position with associated machining and drillings. The crankshaft bearings needed regrinding, the barrel boring, as well as the new camshaft and pistons. This was beyond my skills and equipment so off the engine went to be 'sorted'. So the next decision was either wait for the 'new' engine or carry on with more stripping and those advisors suggested I really should do the forks, swinging arm and isolastics, as I was so far down the line and why not check the gearbox while I'm at it.

The next weekend the bike was stripped to the frame! Having removed the running gear and gearbox there was not much left and the frame came with some dents, which needed sorting so why not. Suddenly my pride and joy had all but disappeared and I only had 8 weeks to get it back on the road and a full-time job to do as well! Time to call in the advisors and see if they could offer anything practical in addition to the verbal advice. It's amazing what those with 'the knowledge' can do when they know who to speak to and what they are doing. A week later I had the frame back with powder coating and looking like new. Meanwhile the finished engine and gearbox were collected and numerous new parts delivered and rebuilding started on 23<sup>rd</sup> March.

I was surprised how quickly all the bits went together and a month later the bike looked like a Commando again and was ready to start. First kick and the engine fired up, albeit a little lumpy. Had I remembered everything or was it going to seize up? A few teething problems later and it was ready for its MOT, which it thankfully sailed through. Only one problem and 2 weeks to Montlhery, the timing case had developed an annoying new oil leak from the wire exit at the back of the points housing. This turned out to be a tiny porosity that only manifested when the engine was fully hot and when eventually discovered only needed a small weld to cure. The bike was now dry but with only 100 miles completed the trip to France would have to be limited to running in speed.

Mark Benians

*To be continued*

## **2003 Events**

<b><u>Thames Valley NOC - Branch Events Calender</u></b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Status</b>
Tues 15 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley NOC clubnight - Cricketers	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed
<b>August</b>			
Fri 1 <sup>st</sup>	Thames Valley extra-club run to White Waltham aerodrome	Reg Pick	Details to be confirmed
Fri 8 <sup>th</sup> to Sun 10 <sup>th</sup>	Norton Owners Club International Rally at Clonakilty near Cork	Roadholder	Details to be confirmed
Tues 19 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley NOC clubnight - Cricketers	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed
Tues 26 <sup>th</sup>	Norton Owners Club Manx GP reunion	Ian Verrinder	Details to be confirmed
<b>September</b>			
Tues 9 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley extra-club run to the VOC at the Plowden Arms, Shiplake	Mick Hunter	Confirmed
Tues 16 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley NOC clubnight - Cricketers	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed
Sat 20 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley track day at Chertsey	Barry Stickland	CANCELLED
<b>October</b>			
Tues 7 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley extra-clubnight run to the VMCC at the Cricketers at Pirbright	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed
Tues 21 <sup>st</sup>	Thames Valley NOC clubnight - Cricketers	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed
<b>November</b>			
Tues 18 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley NOC clubnight - Cricketers	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed
Mon 24 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley NOC branch AGM	Ian Verrinder	To be confirmed
<b>December</b>			
Tues 16 <sup>th</sup>	Thames Valley NOC clubnight - Cricketers	Ian Verrinder	Confirmed